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# BACCALAUREATE SERMONS

R.G. FERGUSON



Ferguson

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# BACCALAUREATE SERMONS

BY  
R. G. FERGUSON

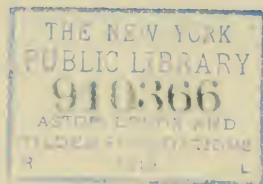


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## FOREWORD

Two reasons influence me in publishing these Baccalaureate Sermons.

First and chiefly to meet the expressed wish of many of "my boys and girls" of several college generations. They are all over our great country from Maine to California and from Oregon to Florida; they are all over the world — in China, Japan, India, Egypt, Persia and other missionary fields; they are in goodly number "Somewhere in France" and with khaki-clad men in other lands. I have had and still have them in my heart and their desire has with me something of the force of a command. But a second reason is the hope that when my few years are ended I may still be preaching a little to those who may read the book.

The sermons are given with scarcely any change, with the local and temporal coloring retained.

I commenced work in Westminster College in 1884 and I am still with it in 1918. My successors in the office of the Presidency — Rev. Robert McWatty Russell, D.D., from 1906 to 1915, now of the Moody Bible School and Rev. Wm. Charles Wallace, D.D., the present incumbent have both shown me great courtesy and good will and have encouraged me to remain with the College. This I have been glad to do and to contribute however little to the prosperity and usefulness of the institution as a servant of Christ and His Church. Bivat, creseat, floreat, Westminster!

New Wilmington, Pa.



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BACCALAUREATE SERMONS



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## SERMON I, 1886

### INDIVIDUALITY

*Then I consulted with myself.—Nehemiah 5: 7.*

THE condition of things in Jerusalem at this time was already ominous and daily growing worse. In meeting the common danger from foes without, attention had been withdrawn from another danger that was silently, yet rapidly developing within. There were inequalities and oppressions. The rich were taking advantage of the necessities of the poor. Lands were mortgaged and children were sold into bondage. The rich were growing richer and the poor were getting poorer. The pangs of poverty were keenly felt and there was despair of any immediate improvement of their condition. At length a cry arose, a wail of agony and an appeal for redress. There were many notes of complaint—yet they were all of one strain. There was an outcry of men and women who were in straits to get bread, who could hardly solve the problem of mere living, who were tearfully parting with everything they held dear to keep soul and body together. If not a bread-riot, it was like the muttering that presages such a storm of human passion. The elements were marshalling for a serious disturbance of the peace and prosperity of the community of which Nehemiah was the head.

Well was it that such a large-hearted, self-poised, resolute man was at the helm of affairs or his enterprise

might have been shipwrecked on the very verge of success.

Nehemiah was indignant. His strong nature was roused by the unbrotherly conduct of the wealthy Jews. His own simple statement is "I was very angry." His whole soul was moved by a deep and intense resentment against the wrong that was done which constrained him to rebuke the wrong-doers. He did not however lose his balance and rush headlong into unwise contention. With equal self-control he adjusted himself to the situation. "Then I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers." He did not take counsel of his clique or club or order. He did not watch to discover what way the prevailing winds were blowing. He had not surrendered his manhood to the keeping of others, be they many or few and therefore when the exigency arose he says—"I consulted with myself." Perhaps the example of Nehemiah may emphasize a lesson or two worth learning for those who are just pushing out from the shore with the oars in their own hands.

I. Nehemiah's soul *was in his own keeping*.

Personality has been described as "that in man which enables him to say I." Not only can he be distinguished but he *distinguishes himself* from every other. In a subdued sense that line of Wordsworth might be spoken of every human being—"Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart." There is that in each of us which no other shares. It belongs to one alone—it constitutes him what he is. If we have a personality of the same nature as that of others, which we may recognize in them as well as in ourselves, it is none the less true that we are separated from one another by the whole breadth of being. We are conscious of self as existing apart from every other and give expression to the fact in our common modes of speech—"I" and "Thou" and "He" or "She."

But not only are we distinct from each other as per-

sons, but we are diverse from each other as individuals. There are peculiarities of form and feature, of intellect, sensibilities and will that make each of us differ from every other. When we call one a poet; another a thinker, another a philanthropist, another a hero, we are simply labeling them so as to set forth their prominent individual characteristics. You think over your associates in class and hall and you say of one—"He is a keen observer," of another—"He has a wonderful memory," of another—"He will have his own way," of another—"He is the soul of honor." You say of one—"She has a brilliant imagination," of another, "She has more intellect than she gives herself credit for," of another, "Her cheerful honest face was a perpetual benediction," of another, "She was reverent toward God and every sacred thing." But what is the meaning of these statements? What but this that these are the impressions of their individual characters that have been stamped upon you by your association with them, while similar impressions of your individual character have been fastened in their minds by the fellowship of months and years.

But why has the Creator thus set us apart from one another and given us such diverse endowments? Is it not to make monotony impossible? Is not our individuality given us as a charge to keep? Let it not be surrendered at the bidding of any, nor stolen away while we sleep. We but serve our common humanity when we hold our rightful God-given place, when we fill up the deficiencies of one another by using the powers which God has given in the field which God has assigned. There is a proper assertion of one's individuality and of this Nehemiah gives us a right noble example. Sensible of the responsibility of his high position and conscious of his own powers he "consulted with himself" how he should act in this trying hour. He belonged to himself and had not submitted himself to the keeping of another.

I know there are many offensive ways of asserting ourselves against which we do well to guard. Here rises the egotist who is constantly thrusting his personality on the attention of others, who is absorbed in thoughts of self and pours them out of the abundance of his heart on long-suffering and disgusted hearers. Here sits another stubbornly planted in the path of progress, like a stump in the middle of the road, content if he is only giving uncomfortable jolts to every passer-by. Yonder comes another with lightning in his eye and thunder in his voice and power in his hand, imperious, domineering, crushing every other man's individuality in order to maintain his own. All these we condemn without hesitation and without stint. But shall we fly from one extreme to another? Shall we descend from imperiousness to imbecility? If there be undue self-assertion there is also undue self-repression. There is a time to speak as well as to be silent—a time to speak brave earnest words of counsel or rebuke. There is a time to withstand as well as to coincide, a time for fearless action as well as for patient submission. No man has a right to barter away his birthright of independent thought and action for whatever mess of pottage is promised him.

It is true that college life does not always encourage that sturdiness of character for which we speak. The individual is swallowed up in the mass. Thomas Arnold of Rugby counted this the bane of the Public Schools of England and unless the public sentiment be a healthy one, it is apt to be the bane of schools and colleges with us. Dean Stanley, speaking of Arnold's desire to cultivate in his pupils an abhorrence of evil, says of him—"Amongst all the causes which in his judgment contributed to the absence of this feeling and to the moral childishness which he considered the great curse of public schools the chief seemed to him to lie in the spirit which was there encouraged of combination, of companionship, of excessive deference to the public opinion prevalent in

the school." Let us cherish the hope that in this little world of ours we are coming to the ideal condition in which in any matter each may have an opinion of his or her own and suffer no loss of general respect and esteem but rather the contrary.

But out in that great world to which some of you are about to go there may be yet stronger foes to your individuality. You will be enticed to put a noose about your neck. It will be lined with fair promises of benefits and decked with flowers of plausible speech. But if it fetters the mind and hinders the free exercise of judgment and conscience it is an enemy in disguise. Mr. Mill says truly — "Even despotism does not produce its worst effects as long as individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality is despotism by whatever name it may be called." Beware of everything that would rob you of that which is emphatically your own. Let nothing — custom, fashion, public opinion, party lash, association or order — override or delude you to give up your ownership of yourself. To thine own self be true.

Who is it will not dare himself to trust:  
 Who is it hath not strength to stand alone:  
 Who is it thwarts and bilks the inward *must*:  
 He and his works like sand are blown.

Seek if you will the counsel of your wise and faithful friend but accept no Lord and lawgiver but the Divine. Preserve through all the years the manly strength — the womanly dignity to *consult with yourself* concerning the course you pursue. Respond for yourself with Joshua — "As for me I will serve the Lord." Answer with a ringing "NO" the enticements of evil.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
 In the bivouac of life,  
 Be not like dumb driven cattle;  
 Be a hero in its strife.



## II. Nehemiah took counsel of his higher nature.

"He consulted with himself." He stopped to think instead of acting on the noble impulse of the moment. His course was not taken from a mere outburst of feeling — a momentary flash — a sudden dart. This only moved him to prompt consideration of the present evil and such decisive action as the case demanded. But with what elements of his nature did he consult? Certainly not with the lower, for the very idea of counsel with them is utterly incongruous. Appetite and passion brook no restraint and to parley with them is to become their slave. Says Paul — "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage lest by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be rejected." How sad it is when this is reversed and the body has supreme lordship over the Spirit! Alas! how many noble minds and generous hearts have been reduced to the most abject bondage by the appetite for drink, and how many more fall into the deeper degradation — the bottomless pit of lust.

Nehemiah took counsel of his higher nature — of his reason and conscience — of all within him that brought him into kinship with the angels and with God.

First of all he consulted his conscience. He raised that prime question that should take precedence of every other in deciding upon a course of action, "What ought I to do?" His sense of justice caused him to sympathize with the oppressed whose despairing cry fell upon his ear. Nor did his emotions evaporate without producing any impulse to right action. He knew that with him rested the right solution of the problem presented and conscientiously set himself to solve it. Having determined what he ought to do, he asked further — How can I best do it? He did not cling to principles and ignore means. Having settled the question of principle he sought with all diligence and candor the speediest and best way of securing its triumph. There are those who plunge into the battle and leave their wisdom behind them with their



forsaken baggage. They run wild and lose their power to consider clearly and honestly what the times demand. If they do better than those who, though interested in the right, lazily dismiss it from their minds they do less than is worthy of themselves or the cause they espouse. Surely the cause that has enough in it to fire our souls with zeal has also enough in it to engage our earnest thought — to cause us to look before we leap.

And who can doubt that Nehemiah turned his thoughts heavenward in that hour of serious consideration? It was impossible that he should exclude God from that consultation with himself. Is not He a part of the necessary environment of every human soul? Does he not envelop our souls as the atmosphere envelops these bodies of ours? My conscience within me is the "voice of God," and every intuition of right brings me into the presence of the Divine Lawgiver. My indwelling sense of dependence leads out my thoughts to an Omnipotent Father on whom I can lean. I stretch forth my hand and everything I touch in nature reminds me of an Intelligent First Cause. I turn over the leaves of the past and as I watch them closely there comes out upon them so that I *must* read it — The hand of God is here. Ah no! We cannot seclude ourselves from the "Father of our spirits," whose handiwork is the created universe and whose unceasing care extends to every smallest part of it. Few men lived more in the joyous consciousness of divine presence than did Nehemiah. When he heard the harrowing tale of Hanani concerning the desolations of Jerusalem he sat down and wept and fasted and prayed for days together. He thought if he could only enlist the King but he knew not how. The burden of his soul during his long season of prayer was — "Grant mercy in the sight of this man." As the King's cupbearer he went into the King's presence, but contrary to his usual custom with a sad countenance. And when he told the reason and the King opened the door of opportunity by asking —

"For what dost thou make request?" he did not spring forward to enter it but silently prayed to the God of heaven for guidance lest he should make mistake. Alas! how often when flushed with unexpected successes and large opportunities are opened up before us instead of being solemnized we are only emboldened and in our pride and self-confidence we prepare for a fall. Nehemiah took God with him all along the way. When he reached the holy city he says—"I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me." When enemies sought to hinder the good work he records—showing how he combined energy with piety, vigilance with faith—"We made our prayer unto God and set a watch against them day and night." Former governors took tribute of the people and their servants bare rule over them but he solemnly affirms—"So did not I because of the *fear of God*." Can we then doubt that in this transaction with himself there was an invisible Witness whose presence was recognized? If his life be all of a piece, this counsel with himself in all probability took place on the house-top where Peter prayed at mid-day or in a private chamber such as that of Daniel. He was alone, except that God was with him. He whose name is Counsellor was by his side, suffusing his mind and heart with His Spirit.

Reason! Conscience! God!

Would that we could write these words upon your memories, yea imprint them upon your characters. Would that we everyone of us could exalt them to their supremacy over our souls! Thus would we be brought into fellowship with all the truly great ones that have ever lived upon the earth. Who are they that shall be held in everlasting remembrance, that the ages to come will love to hear about? More and more as Christianity gains the ascendancy will military glory and unsanctified brilliancy drop out of the consideration of men. But as long as the ages last those whose names are linked with

the elevation of mankind, with liberty and truth and right, will never be forgotten. The men of conscience and the men of God are those whom the world will not willingly let die. Paul will outlive the Cæsars; Luther and Wesley will outlive the reigning princes of their times, Garrison will outlive Clay; Whittier will outlive Emerson; Nehemiah has outlived Artaxerxes.

Young ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class, problems are already presenting themselves to you requiring prompt solution, problems that no other can solve for you, problems that either time or you will settle. You with your own vigorous grasp or time with its onward flow. Which will it be?

To everyone of you has already come again and again that solemn question of Pilate — What shall I do with Jesus? Has your answer thus far been what you intend it shall be before life closes? Would that we could part company with everyone of you in the confident assurance that Christ is formed within you the hope of glory. If some of you have said "He is mine" what place have you given Him within you? Is he in the very center — on the very throne of your being? Do you rest in his Love? Do you bow to his will? What are you doing with Jesus? What does your higher nature bid you do with him? Reason and conscience both say — Let him be enthroned high above every rival claimant for possession of our souls. He only is truly wise who is wise for eternity and wise today. Soon if you are not already there, you will be confronted by another question of very serious import. What use shall I make of my gifts and attainments? Undoubtedly providential opportunities will be a large determining factor here. Yet there is always a large domain in every life in which there is liberty of choice. We may consult with ourselves and the conclusion will correspond with our ideals and general purposes. Let us urge upon you here also to make Reason, Conscience and God, your advising cabinet.

Ask yourself — “What am I fitted for? In what direction do my divinely given powers point me? In what avocation am I likely to be successful? Ask yourself — Where are the moral risks so great that I dare not venture on them? In what line will I be likely to develop the best character? Where can I do the most good? Ask God to shine upon your way, to be your interpreter of events, to lead you whithersoever He would have you go. As the wise men followed the Star in the East so do you follow these guiding stars of your higher nature toward the sunset of life and they will lead you beyond the hills that skirt your horizon into a wide country where all is clear and pure and joyous forever. May the Lord guide everyone of you by his counsel and afterward receive you to glory.

Other problems will present themselves to you as you go, some intricate, others sharply defined, some requiring wisdom, others courage. Some will belong to you personally, others you will meet in common with your fellows. In every age there are great questions of Church and State, of morals and reform. Where shall you settle them for yourself? Where but at the bar of your own reason and conscience? Take no heed to public clamor. Yield not to the dictation of either good men or bad. Make God’s law as revealed in conscience and the Bible your standard. Seek God’s spirit as the illuminator of your understanding. Endeavor to act rationally, conscientiously and christianly and surely you cannot go far astray. These are stirring times in which we live. Sometimes the very foundation seems to be giving way. Who shall guard and maintain the pillar of social order? Who shall stand at the breach? There is need of true-hearted women and right-hearted men — of moral, thoughtful, law-abiding, God-fearing men and women, with intelligence enough to discern the follies of wild theorists and force enough to resist their designs. No “reed shaken with the wind” will do. But what can

you or I do? We seem like the almost invisible mote in the air, that the sunbeam discovers to us, or like a drop of water falling into the sea. But not so! Who can tell the value of a single noble life? It may not be great in itself as the world judges and yet be felt the world over through other lives which it has influenced. It maybe the slender cord that draws the mighty cable that spans the moral chasm. The pious little maid in Naanan's house had an influence that was great as well as Esther in the palace. Even a single voice crying in the wilderness may prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. Let us not then take a despairing view of life. Go forth hopefully, strong in your conscious integrity, strong in the truth that has taken possession of you and above all strong in God. Go forth with love to God and men, unselfishly consulting your nobler self, with the purpose to do good to men as you have opportunity, to make your lives a blessing to mankind.

Let me commend to your attention that picture of a loyal soul, drawn by the master hand of Milton —

Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
Among the innumerable false unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal,  
Nor number, nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, nor change his constant mind.

And remember that a greater than Milton has said, as one having both authority and power, "Be ye faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." May that crown be put upon the head of everyone of you. "I consulted with myself," I need scarcely say, does not mean making self the center of one's being. There is a wide gulf between being self-centered and self-mastered, between living *for* self and living *from* self.

In *The Life of Henry Drummond* by Dr. George Adam Smith is related the following illustrative fact:



There was a medical student a year or two ago who was half-way through his course when it dawned upon him that he had been living for himself and he decided to change and go and see if he could find anyone to help. He found an old chum who had gone to the dogs, given up his work and his exams and was living aloof from other students and drinking hard. He went and found him lying on the floor drunk. He paid his debts, took him to his room, gave him supper and put him to bed. On the next day he had a talk with him and they entered into a written contract to keep them both straight as follows —

1. Neither of us to go out alone.
2. Twenty minutes only to be allowed to go to the college and return; overtime to be accounted for.
3. One hour every night to be given over to reading other than studies.
4. That bygones be bygones.

Both men signed and they lived together. After a time No. 2 saw that in the evening hour outside of studies the Bible was read. No. 1 never spoke to him about it; he simply read — At last No. 2 changed. What he changed to I need not say. The last I heard of them was this — says the narrator. No. 1 is filling an appointment of great importance in London. No. 2 passed his exams that year with the highest university distinction and is now in private practice.

It was a splendid piece of self-mastery and self-sacrifice. Did it pay? Though no life here calls for such heroic devotion, it may suggest to us how admirable a thing it is to be the helper of another to an overcoming life. Will you consult with yourself about it?

## SERMON II, 1887

### A YOUNG MAN'S COURAGE

*Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.—1 Samuel 17: 32.*

CHARLES KINGSLEY says of David —“ A great man — warrior, statesman, king, poet, prophet. A man of many joys and many sorrows, many virtues and many crimes; but through them all *every inch a man.*” The prophet Samuel predicting the downfall of Saul and the elevation of another to his place speaks of David as the Lord's choice and “ the man after God's own heart.” He was a man of the people and a man of God. He won the hearts of the people because God had won his own heart. He was manly because he was godly. He was manly enough to be sorry for sin and to say so with a heartiness that inspired new confidence. Let him who confounds pride with nobleness, stubbornness with firmness, insolence with courage, learn a lesson of humility and penitence and even passionate confession of sin from this hero of the valley of Elah. He was never more manly than when he cried out of the depths of his soul —“ I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me.”

He was likewise manly enough to *forgive* as well as to confess. It is the small soul that cherishes a grudge and bides its time for revenge. It is the magnanimous man or woman that can overlook an offense and bury it out of sight. Nabal sent an insulting reply to David's courteous request and for the moment his blood was hot and his heart was bent on vengeance. But when Nabal's wife did what she could to make amends for her hus-

band's outrageous act, he turned from his dire purpose and blessed God that by her coming he was saved from the guilt of blood. Saul pursued David as a hunter pursues a partridge in the mountains. Everywhere he sought him that he might take his life; yet twice Saul was in David's hands and he might have been avenged. But he refrained from vengeance and also restrained his friends. David's nobleness in this awakened some responsive nobleness in Saul so that he returned from following him and exclaimed — "Behold I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly." And when Saul died upon the battlefield, instead of chuckling over the fall of his sworn foe, he utters this immortal dirge, welling up from within his distressed soul — "How are the mighty fallen! — The bow of Jonathan turned not back and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul." It is the sorrowful tribute of a friend rather than the constrained testimony of a foe.

What do we know of the youth of this generous, knightly, heroic man? When he was a young man what promise did he give of a noble career?

Yonder he comes at the call of his father Jesse. He has been keeping his father's flock upon the hills and plains. He comes with the bounding step of one who has been breathing the pure air and drinking in health with every breath. As the Jews describe him, his hair is red, his size is medium, his face is ruddy and beautiful. Such are his endowments of body and soul, of nature and grace, that he is singled out by Samuel by direction of the Spirit as the anointed of the Lord for the office of king. The record is — "And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him from that day forward." Yet he serenely and loyally bided his time. He waited for God and steadily performed his humble task. Still he kept



his father's flock and found in this employ a school for every kingly virtue. Here he fought with wild beasts and wild men and soon gained repute as a valiant man. At length opportunity came to show his valor before the eyes of the nation. The armies of Israel confront the armies of the invading Philistines. A mail-clad giant sallies forth each day as champion of the enemies of the living God and casts defiance in the face of Israel's host. Who will accept the challenge and take away Israel's reproach? Dismay and fear filled the hearts of all till David appeared upon the scene and said to Saul—"Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Let us consider

I. This young man's courage. Need we stop to define courage? The essential quality of mind which it represents is so marked and striking that we are in little danger of misconception. It may be mingled with other elements, noble or ignoble, on account of which we distinguish between a false courage and a true. But in that which is peculiar to itself, it is easily recognized by all. It is that which gives strength, solidity, force to the man. It is that which makes one superior to difficulty or danger. Can we discover some of the factors that entered into the courage of David? What made him courageous when all about him were terrified?

1. David was no doubt conscious of physical strength. He had all the buoyancy of youth and robust health. No doubt physical vigor helps to make a man brave and strong. Depression of mind is likely to accompany physical weakness. It becomes therefore a duty of every one who would act a heroic part in life to care for the body through which his purpose must be achieved. And on the other hand, it is more shameful for one equipped by God with noble powers of body and mind to shirk the task to which his powers are more than equal.

Emerson says—"The first wealth is health; sickness is poor-spirited and cannot serve any one." There never

was a braver man than Elijah — stern, self-contained, intrepid. He was the John Knox of Ahab's day, who never feared the face of man, yet once in his life even he lost heart and asked God that he might die. And why? No doubt there were reasons for his despondency but that which gave them control over him was his physical exhaustion. The nervous strain of Carmel and succeeding events and the weariness induced by travel left him at the mercy of discouraging thoughts. But God gave him, what he needed, sleep and food — the shelter of the juniper tree and seasonable meat and drink till he rose refreshed and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. It is one of the commendable things about the Y. M. C. A. that it emphasizes physical as well as spiritual culture.

2. David's past experience gave him courage. He remembered it and spake of it in this connection. Let us think of it now only on its human side. There were achievements which his intellect had planned and his hands had wrought. We do not fear to undertake what we have accomplished before. The surgeon who has performed many a difficult operation finds his highest pleasure in the case that tasks his skill. The veteran of many battles sometimes seems absolutely devoid of fear. We wonder at the steadiness that results from drill and hard service. Why is it that ordinary men attain such indifference to danger? A military man discounts our admiration by calling it a "mechanic courage which the ordinary race of men become masters of from being always in a crowd." But surely David's courage was not due to the contact and supporting presence of others, for he stood alone amid a panic-stricken host and the inspiration of his courageous act was from within himself and from his own record. He relates to Saul to kindle confidence — "Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them."

It is a conclusion of his mind which he can employ to instruct others and not a mere impulse of the moment or contagion of circumstances. It is an intelligent inference from facts, that has weight with all who are capable of appreciating the facts and reading their lesson. He knew what he could do with his strong right arm and therefore was not afraid to accept the gage of battle thrown down by Goliath of Gath. We learn to be self-reliant, whether in mental or physical effort, by training our powers by use.

3. David's courage was the direct outcome of faith in God. He trusted in God and therefore was eager for the fray. His self-reliance was born of reliance upon God. Whatever influence we may attribute to his natural and acquired fitness, the supreme influence was divine—a faith that had God as its Author and its Object. On this alone does David lay any stress whatever. His experience to which he refers is not a matter of trained muscles, but of help received. He does not come in sight as an Actor, but thrusts God before the vision of Saul as the real Victor—"The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." And as with bounding step, armed only with his staff and sling, he ran to meet his antagonist in the open field, how marked the contrast between the proud disdain of the one and the humble joyful confidence of the other. Listen to this answer of faith and you cannot mistake the paramount source of his courage—"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand."

How all this changes the nature of the spectacle we behold! 'Tis not a mere measuring of swords, a trial of physical strength and skill. It is lifted up into the

higher region of moral courage — of championship of the living God. There is a high issue at stake between right and wrong, between God and his enemies, and David in God's name undertakes the battle of the right. And wherever such an issue is made, it is faith in God that gives courage and constancy to the defenders of the righteous cause. Take away faith in God and you clip the wings of every noble aspiration. Men will be content to eat and drink and die and seek for nothing higher than present comfort and ease. Take away faith in God and you cut the sinews of effort for the welfare of the race. Write it in the convictions of men that there is no God and no hereafter and you write the death-warrant of every moral reform. But let, on the other hand, warm, vigorous, vitalizing faith in God possess men's souls and it will make them strong to do and dare in behalf of truth and humanity for His sake.

The heroes of the ages are heroes of faith. Put your finger at random on any name conspicuous in history in connection with the moral progress of mankind and you may without fear of mistake include him in this class. Moses endured as "seeing him who is invisible." Stephen could furnish the first example of Christian martyrdom because he believed that his Divine Redeemer was at the right hand of power. Luther cried — "So help me God." Wilberforce and Buxton were men as eminent for piety as for philanthropy. Lincoln, under the heavy burden of his exalted station, sought once and again an interest in the people's prayers. Bismarck and Gladstone were great enough to do homage to Him whose throne is in the heavens. Gordon, the hero of the last century, the uncrowned king, was pre-eminently a man of faith. You remember how the eyes of the world turned toward Khartoum with intensest interest. And why? Because the world's most heroic life was in jeopardy. And what was the secret spring of his heroism? As he left Cairo he wrote — "I am so glad to get

away. I go up alone, with an infinite Almighty God to direct and guide me; and am glad to so trust Him as to fear nothing and indeed, to feel sure of success." Not only was his heroism associated with piety, but his piety was the very foundation from which it rose, the seed from which it grew. His faith was as singular and pronounced as his fearlessness.

Thus it has been in all the past. Thus it will be in the eventful future. The heroes of truth and justice and liberty and humanity will be those who shall follow the footsteps of Joshua and Samuel and David, of Luther and Knox and Gordon, and by faith in God tread difficulties and fears under their feet. Unto the exercise of this moral courage — this brave championship of every good cause — God calls every one of you young men and women. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings. For the moth shall devour them like a garment, yea, the moth shall devour them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation. Who art thou that fearest man that shall die, and forgettest thy God? I will put words in thy mouth, and cover thee in the shadow of my hand, to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth."

II. The cause which called out this young man's courage. There is a natural physical courage that may be wedded to either good or bad. There is the courage of the bandit springing from the lust of gain or the love of adventure. There is the courage of the Nihilist born of despair. But when it is a thing of the mind and conscience and is devoted to a worthy cause, it is twice noble and our admiration may be unchecked and unqualified.

1. David's courage was for the honor and safety of Israel. He was no enemy to law and order. He did not scatter fire-brands and death. He did not seek to



undermine the existing government or unsettle the foundations of society.

Never was subject more loyal to the king than David was to Saul. He said, "*Thy servant* will go." Proposing no terms, setting up no claims, recognizing Saul's superior rank, he offers the service of a faithful, law-abiding, obedient subject. He is a servant and except in a lawful way, he would not consent to be anything else. His loyalty is the more remarkable because of his own knowledge of God's purpose concerning him. Samuel had years ago anointed him to be Saul's successor. Why not take the first opportunity to gain the hearts of the people and spring into Saul's seat? Why not rebel and summon Samuel as a witness to his right to it? No, no. David's mind is quite the opposite. He will bide God's time. He will learn to rule by first learning to obey. Even when Saul became his enemy, he would not lift a hand to strike him down. This gallant act won for him the hearts of the people, but it was not meant for this. It was his simple, honorable, loyal purpose to maintain the government of Saul and the honor of Israel.

It seems strange that Mr. Mill should speak of patriotism as a virtue lost sight of in a "purely Christian ethics." The career of David prior to his ascension to the throne is itself sufficient answer to the false assertion. And the same might be said of Joseph and Moses and Nehemiah and Paul — nay of every representative Jew of the olden time. Patriotism is not less a Christian than a national virtue. But how shall patriotism be shown? Is he a lover of his country who praises everything and censures nothing? If there are great wrongs, shall they go unrebuked? or shall we, David-like, hurl at them the stones of God's truth? Wherever there is national sin, there is national weakness and he best loves his country who loves God more.

2. David's courage was for the honor of God. He not only had faith in God but had a single eye to his

glory. How clearly this appears in the account of this transaction. He justifies his eager confidence in going to meet Goliath by the declaration — "Seeing he hath defied the armies of the *living God*." His mission was equally to take away Israel's reproach and to vindicate Jehovah. "That all the earth may know there is a God in Israel." And is it not the mission of every right-hearted man in our time to bear aloft the standard of Jehovah?

Is God's law set aside? Is God's Sabbath trampled upon? Is God's image in man defaced? Do men conspire together to resist God's will? Do they plot against the Lord and his anointed? Do they obstruct the progress and triumph of Christ's kingdom? In such a time as this, the friends of Christ must come forth both for defense and attack. There is need of brave men and women whose hearts God has touched to stand in the breach — to maintain the cause of God in the world — to push on the conquest of Immanuel. Let every Christian join the ranks of true reform, for sake of God and home and native land. Let every Christian further the cause of missions at home and abroad for sake of God and humanity.

#### WANTED ; MEN

Not systems fit and wise  
Not faiths with rigid eyes  
Not wealth in mountain piles  
Not power with gracious smiles  
Not even the potent pen.

Wanted ; men.

Men and deeds  
Men that can dare and do  
Not longings for the new  
Not pratings of the old —  
Good life and action bold —  
These the occasion needs,  
Men and deeds.

Young ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class of 1887, if I mistake not you enter upon life at a time in the nation's history when you will have ample opportunity to display either cowardice or courage. Which shall it be? You mean it to be courage. But distinguish between the appearance and the thing. A bluff and blustering manner may only conceal a craven spirit. A humble, quiet demeanor may be the modest veil of an earnest, intense, courageous soul. Be right at heart, all on fire with love to truth and right and God and you will need no tragic manner to let people know it.

Conspicuous service is seldom or never a mushroom growth. Out on the peaceful hills, where he tended his father's flock, with no eye gazing on him but the Omniscient, David was true to his trust and with faith and courage rescued the lamb from the lion and the bear. It was after all the experience of his retirement that he slew the giant and returned from the field to hear the air rent at the gates of every city with the shout — "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." So it will be with you. By performing a courageous part wherever God puts you now, you will husband strength for a more important day in the future. Moreover, have you ever thought how much of the world's best work is done by her young men and women? John Howard was 28 when he began to alleviate the miseries of mankind. Elizabeth Fry entered on a similar work at 30. Luther had gone through all his long struggle for light and freedom and yet was only 34 years of age when he nailed his 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg. Garibaldi began his revolutionary career at 28. Joan of Arc took the field at 18 and led forth the French troops to victory. McCheyne lived not quite 30 years to make his name a household word all over Scotland — yea all over Christendom. The life of Jesus — if we may mention his matchless name along with those of his servants — was only a few years in length and yet



it was enough to change the face of the whole earth.

Do not then wait for the future. Begin at once to live out a noble spirit. You may not have any other years to do good in than those which are now passing. In any case they are your training school for future usefulness. It is the "village Hampden" who will, if occasion require, withstand the tyrant of the Commonwealth. But expect not to escape the penalty of faithfulness. There may be trials as the test and voucher of your fidelity. But let not your heart fail because of this. Solomon said—"A living dog is better than a dead lion," and the words are true as he meant them, true concerning the capacity for enjoyment and effort in the present life. But if you estimate men by their moral worth, their real worth to mankind, let us rather say—"A dead lion is better than a living dog." Haddock dead counts more than his murderer alive. A dead Gambrell is better than a living champion of the saloon. Be bold for the cause that commends itself to your judgment and conscience as right. Be zealous for the honor of God and the welfare of man. Be a Christian at all hazards. I am assured that all the members of this class make confession of the name of Jesus Christ. Let me urge you to be loyal, consecrated, courageous servants of your acknowledged Lord and Master as long as you live.

Keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. And when life is closed and the judgment is set, may you every one stand unabashed before Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire and hear Him say—"Faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

### SERMON III, 1888

“AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?”

*But he, willing to justify himself said unto Jesus —“ And who is my neighbor?”— Luke 10: 29.*

RATIONALISTIC interpreters are accustomed to speak of Jesus as a “wonderful genius,” whose clear seer-like insight into truth and men awakens their fervent admiration. While we recognize in Him something infinitely more than they find — words as well as acts that are Divine, we may admire with them the brilliant answers, the matchless skill of the man Christ Jesus. We read the simple, unadorned story of his encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians who came to entangle him in their talk (Math. 22). We see him foil their attack at every point of approach. The Sadducees came with a poser concerning the resurrection; but to the astonishment of the multitude he put them to silence by arguments they could not gainsay. Then the Pharisees learning nothing from the discomfiture of their old time foes pressed forward to the attack. But so quickly and authoritatively came the answer to their test-question, an answer so obviously complete and true that they too were driven back into a state of quiescence. Then turning upon them Jesus pressed his advantage with a question they could not even attempt to answer. Their rout was so complete and overwhelming that “No man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forward ask him any more questions.”

Who can restrain admiration of *the man* as we see him thus calmly and effectively disposing of his assailants one by one, without bitterness and yet without coming short of their entire vanquishment.

We have a somewhat similar feeling as we read this account of the interview of a certain lawyer with Jesus. What wondrous tact the Saviour shows! What freedom from assumption! What deference to the learned scribe! Yet what certainty of aim! How simply and surely he leads him into the truth and arrests cavil by making it well-nigh impossible. The lawyer asks, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” and Jesus adroitly refers the question by asking — “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” The law was the scribe’s own standard. It was his business to know and declare it; Jesus asked what he could not refuse to answer and at the same time made a graceful recognition of his learning in the law. So the answer came without any apparent reluctance — “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy *neighbor* as thyself.” Immediately Jesus declared his approval — “Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live.” The lawyer came for controversy and lo! it is ended before it has begun. He came to entrap Jesus and only gets from him a confirmation of the doctrine of the law.

Prompt to see his situation, he seeks to cover his retreat by another question. Though they seem so well agreed, possibly on some one point their views may be diverse. Willing to justify himself, hoping to shield his personal pride, he asks — “And who is my neighbor?” The answer came in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is equally admirable as an answer to the questioner and as an exhibition of a great truth. Certainly we owe a debt to this ancient caviller, whose perversity became the occasion of the creation of so precious a treasure as is here imbedded in the Christian Scriptures. Let us seek to discover the Saviour’s answer to the lawyer’s question and what it involves in human duty.

I. Who is my neighbor?

II. What is neighborly conduct?

Neighbor means one near to me. But what is it makes one near? What are the boundary lines of neighborhood? How extensive is the enclosure within which its law should reign? In ancient times it was variously circumscribed. Society was divided by both horizontal and vertical lines. Barriers of mountain and river and language were intersected by barriers of rank and station and prejudice.

The Greeks counted all outside of their own nation Barbarians, deserving only their contempt. The term itself means alien, but the exclusive hostile spirit of the Greeks gave it a new and opprobrious meaning that almost covered the original from view. It was so used by the Romans, who borrowing their learning from the Greeks, readily imbibed their spirit and regarded all beyond those favored nations as deserving of no consideration at their hand.

The Jews likewise had the same national narrowness. All outside their own race were Gentile dogs, to be driven from their presence as unclean. Their own law said — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But by their interpretation their neighbor was a Jew and a Jew only and so by their false gloss they changed the whole character of the second great commandment of the law until it read in their thought — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." They made it sanction the very thing it was meant to condemn. They brought hate into equal prominence with love and placed both under the approving aegis of Sinai.

They so interpreted neighbor as to exclude therefrom even the Samaritan who dwelt in their own land of Palestine. Geographically they were very near, but affectionately they were distant as the poles. In the days of Jesus so bitter was the antipathy that they had no business or social relations, no dealings whatever with one another. When the Jews were angry with Jesus because he told them the truth, they could find no word that

would so give vent to their anger and expression to their contempt as the name of the hated sect. They hurl it as a fierce javelin in the face of Jesus with all the energy of their fury—“Thou art a *Samaritan* and hast a devil.” This questioning lawyer no doubt would have scorned to reckon the Samaritan as the object of his love and therefore when the Saviour pictured him performing a philanthropic act he refused to give him credit except by the paraphrase—“He that showed mercy on him.”

But there were other lines than those which bound states and provinces that limited neighborhood. Brahmans and Sudras were kept apart by inflexible rule, and whatever reform Buddhism effected in any way it never touched the institutions of caste. Through all the dreary centuries of Hindooism there is no displacement of rank, no crossing or intermingling. High caste and low caste cannot be neighbors because there are unscalable walls between them. Plato's state was a pyramid with a philosopher at its apex and the mass of the people at its base. Individuality was to be crushed out and the state was to be all in all. Aristotle said—“It is evident that some persons are slaves and others freemen by the appointment of nature.” These highest teachers of ancient philosophy thus limit the domain of neighborhood to those of like capacities. Philosopher to philosopher, ruler to ruler, slave to slave—is neighbor. As yet the worth of man as man is undiscovered. Not till Christ came was it announced that man to man is neighbor, that accidents of nationality and rank and gifts are all subordinate to the royal dignity that belongs to every man as the possessor of a human soul. To Christianity belongs the honor of furnishing a right ideal of humanity and of securing sway for it over great masses of men. Jesus exhibited it in his own life of impartial fellowship for service with men of all classes and conditions, with Publican and Pharisee, with sinner and saint, with nobleman and slave, with rich and poor. He put his estimate upon any and every soul



by the price he paid for its redemption. The Gospel of his Kingdom is not fettered by conditions for one any more than for another. The call is to all — to sinful men and women without exception. — Come and be saved. The glory that is promised is the common possession of all the ransomed of the Lord. Lazarus, notwithstanding his poverty, was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom and the thief on the cross entered as soon as he died into paradise with Jesus. Let facts and truths such as these enter into the experience and convictions of a man and his whole conception of man's worth is changed. He sees that everyone is near to him, who has the same nature with himself, the same sinfulness, the same opportunity of salvation, the same endowment of immortality. This is the lesson taught by this parable. And here again mark the insinuating, masterly way in which it is done. He does not spring at once to the delicate point of his answer. We can scarcely say it is by indirection yet certainly it is not by direct statement. We have as it were the negative from which the picture is transferred. We look as it were upon the face of the arranged types from which the glowing page is taken. The parable contains the answer to the lawyer's question and the impression it makes is clear and legible. The man in the way is neighbor to priest and Levite and Samaritan alike. The Samaritan excelled those who went before because without thinking of his belongings he saw the *man* and his plight and came to his rescue. Hold this parable up in the light and there comes out as in a transparency this inwoven truth — Every man is thy neighbor.

And yet we must own the world is slow to learn it — ever learning yet never coming to the full understanding of it. Every age must learn for itself and give it some new application. And yet the world is making headway toward its perfect recognition. The light shines more and more as it advances toward the perfect day. Step

by step since Christ has come we see the steady gain of man. The Reformation was an advance on scholasticism; the declaration of Independence is a long stride ahead of the political symbols of the old world. And yet in this republic flaunting this declaration to the breeze, declaring all men free and equal there were slaves through three-fourths of our history. Mrs. Browning voiced the feelings of the runaway slave in a poem, which contains these words —

Whips, curses; these must answer those  
For in this Union, you have set  
Two kinds of men in adverse rows,  
Each loathing each; and all forget  
The seven wounds in Christ's body fair.

Thank God! that reproach is taken away. Never more shall the wail of the oppressed be heard in our land. So say we all. But is it true? Is the struggle of Christ's truth concerning man ended? Have we no more to plead the cause of the poor against the oppressor? Alas! the bright vision is soon dispelled as we look within and around us. It is a dull ear that hears no cry. It is a dull intellect that discerns no divergence from this law of Christ. We need not go beyond our own thoughts and feelings to find discriminations and partialities and injustices that are at variance with it. We need to learn it over and over and over again, to drink in its very spirit, to square our sentiments and actions by its measure.

Men of the South, abate your prejudices against the man of darker hue. The black man is thy neighbor. Capitalist of the North, consider him who toils for thee in mill or mine. The workman is thy neighbor. Social leaders, be not of those whom Hannah More describes, "Who think their little set mankind." They are thy neighbors who do thee faithful service. The Ribbonman is neighbor to the Orangeman, the Chinese quarter is

neighbor to the sand lots. The Nations of the earth are open to each other as never before. God is bringing them together by steamship and railway and telegraph, until scarcely any land can be said to be afar off. The very ends of the earth are saying to each other—We are neighbors. Thus events seem to echo and emphasize the thought of Christ—that man to man is neighbor—every man to every other the world over. Let us now in the second place inquire

## II. What is neighborly conduct?

The principle of it is in that old command, which is ever new—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love and not hate is the essence of true philanthropy—nay of all Christian morality. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This is the "royal law" of which James speaks to fulfil which he declares is "to do well."

We have a good practical illustration of it in the parable to which we are wise to give attention.

It suggests the *positiveness of the affection required*. That is something more than indifference. To love is not merely not to hate. Indifference can pass by on the other side. That was what the priest did and the Levite did little more except that he stood and looked at the sufferer before he passed on. So there are many who congratulate themselves on their supposed innocence because they hate nobody or on their supposed benevolence because they are ready to exclaim—What a pity! But genuine love does more than look on the object of pity. It yearns to help and does it if it can. It is the fire within its possessor that impels him to seek after and relieve the needy. What a picture of a generous, large-hearted man of wealth is that given by Job—"When the ear heard me then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried and the fatherless and him that had none to help. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.



— I was eyes to the blind and feet was I to the lame. I was father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out.” True love does not wait to be goaded to do good but searches out its object. The radiator in your room in summer time simply receives its temperature from the surrounding atmosphere, but in the winter time it radiates heat till the whole atmosphere about it is warm and comfortable. The former fitly represents the many; the latter the few. It is only here and there, or at least only now and then for the most of us that we are consumed with the desire to bless mankind. While we bless God that there are exceptional instances of devotion such as John Howard and Florence Nightingale and David Brainerd and Livingstone, we may well take shame to ourselves that they are exceptional. Are we not living at a poor dying rate, though we scarcely seem to know it? If we look again at the parable it suggests that true philanthropy is *practical*. When the Samaritan saw the waylaid sufferer, he *came where he was*. He did not gather up his robes lest they be defiled and keep at a self-protecting distance. He did not suffer ecclesiastical or social conventionalities to check the impulse of a warm heart. He “came where the man was.” There is a double benefit given and returned when with our own hands we minister to the needs of others. We must visit them where they are if we would confer the greatest benefit and fully enjoy the luxury of doing good.

The Samaritan, having come to a full knowledge of the man's condition, “bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him.” He was pains-taking and thorough. He spared neither expense nor labor. He was disinterested and self-sacrificing. He assumed the inn-keeper's bill, paying part in advance and giving his obligation for the remainder. All this was done for a stranger to whom others were as much related as he.

He differed from them in this only, that he felt the obligation to befriend the stranger and they did not. He did not wait for the co-operation of others but carried out independently the noble suggestions of his own heart and conscience. It is not enough for us to say — Be ye warmed and filled, if we give not those things needful for the body. It is not enough for us to pity the poor victims of vice while we never reach out a hand to lift them out of the pit into which they have fallen. It is not enough for us to cry — Bravo! to the heroic souls that count not their lives dear to them, that they may carry good tidings to the perishing while we maintain a cowardly missionary policy at home by our niggardliness. While we pray — Thy Kingdom come! we should second our prayers by helping every practical effort to hasten its coming. True neighborly conduct has regard to the whole man — to his physical comfort on the one hand and to his moral and spiritual well-being on the other. When rightly adjusted, efforts in either direction will contribute to the success of efforts in the other. The starving must have bread before he will listen to the cheering story of the Gospel and on the other hand when the Gospel is received it will promote industry and thrift. Earl Shaftsbury had a heart that sympathized equally with the poor in London and the degraded in foreign lands and when he died one of the most striking tributes to his memory was the fact that “the shoeblack brigade with crêpe on arm stood outside Westminster in the rain while his funeral went on within.” What a beautiful story is that which is told of the Princess Eugenia of Sweden. Her friends were amazed at her folly, yet eternity will disclose her wisdom. Selling her jewels, the heirlooms of many generations, she built from the proceeds a home for cripples on an island she happened to visit in search of her own health and then crowned her generous gift with her own personal service. Daily she went to minister to those poor afflicted ones for Jesus’

sake. And the beginning of her reward came *in her work*, the end of it will never come. A poor woman to whom she had brought the news concerning Jesus blessed the Lord for the Princess' coming and kissed her hand while tears from her dying eyes fell on it. And as the Princess saw the tear-drops glistening in the sun-light she said —“ O my Saviour, I sold my jewels for thee, but I see them all restored, and how much more beautiful they are than when I formerly owned them!” Was she not all the more queenly because she fulfilled the royal law of God —“ Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

But while the spirit of Jesus, who went about doing good, leads men and women to care for the bodies of men, it is especially concerned about the souls of men. It is the moral and spiritual degradation of the drunkard that more than all else awakens the pity of his fellows and causes such energy of purpose in behalf of the cause of temperance. It is the fact that men everywhere need the Gospel and without it are lost that arouses the zeal and enthusiasm of the Church in behalf of the missionary cause. Every noble charity — every true reform — every agency of the Gospel has a claim on us because it is in the interest of humanity. Henry M. Stanley went first to the Dark Continent in search of Livingstone, somewhat in the spirit of adventure. But contact with the old hero changed his whole idea of missions. He writes —“ In 1870 I went to him as prejudiced as the biggest atheist in London.— But there came for me a long time for reflection. I was out there away from a worldly world. I saw the solitary old man there and asked myself —‘ How on earth does he stop here? — What is it that inspires him?’ ” But little by little his sympathy for others became contagious; my sympathy was aroused; seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went quietly about his business, I was converted by him, though he never tried to do it.” Such

testimony is honorable alike to both and is sufficient to link their names together as lovers of their race.

My young friends, I only wish that I might enlist you more heartily in the cause of man. Your fields of service may be various — some in one vocation and some in another — some at home and some abroad — some in retirement and some in the high places of the field; but let it be the ambition of you all to leave the world, better, happier, purer for your having lived in it.

Believing that Christianity is the only cure for the ills of society and that its universal prevalence in power is more to be desired than anything else, I am glad that so many of you expect to serve God and your fellow men in the ministry. It is an inspiring moment in the history of mankind and especially in the history of missions. Never was the cry of the nations so clear and urgent as now — Come over and help us. The fields are open and everywhere whitening to the harvest and the prayer of the Church is ascending to the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Some of you that may be yet halting, I trust may be the answer to that prayer.

But if providence marks out for you another course, still let me assure you that Christ wishes your service none the less. Christ needs men in all callings. If God in the years to come shall give you abundant means, the cause of India needs money as well as men. Said Andrew Faller to Carey the pioneer missionary to India — “There is a gold mine in India; but it seems almost as deep as the centre of the earth. Who will venture to explore it?” And the answer of Carey was — “I will go down, but remember that you must hold the ropes.” If there are men going to Englewood and Denver and Portland and San Diego — to Egypt and India as explorers in search of souls, there is need of a strong body of men and women to hold the ropes, to sustain them by their means.

The outlook is cheering. We sometimes picture the threatening cloud, the coming storm, the approaching crisis in such appalling colors that we are well-nigh ready to lose hope. It is no doubt well to realize the magnitude of our undertaking. But let us often turn and look also on the brighter side. Compare the present with any former day in regard to reform or missionary zeal and you will find reason for renewed confidence — not for complacency or pride maybe but surely for encouragement. There are struggles but there are heroes to maintain them. There are defeats but they are the stepping stones to larger victories. We're beaten back in many a fray, Yet ever strength we borrow. And where the vanguard rests today, the rear shall camp tomorrow.

Young men and women of the class of 1888, we do not ask you to espouse any lost or losing cause.

We would rally the sons and daughters of our time to the cause of truth and right — the cause of God and humanity that must and will prevail. We do not ask you to pitch your tent in the words of Garfield in any "graveyard of dead issues." The living issues of every time are those which concern the liberty, progress, elevation and salvation of men. Let it be the aim of everyone of you to bless mankind by unselfish, cheery, serviceable, consecrated lives. Love God and Jesus Christ and you cannot fail to love your neighbor who is made in the image of God. Really love your neighbor and you cannot fail to serve him. And when you pass away from the scenes of earth may it be written of you — not on your tombstones, but in God's book and in the grateful memory of others, of this one — "He served his generation well" and of that one — "She scattered blessings wherever she went" and of you all — "They were faithful; worthy followers of Him who was himself the Good Samaritan — "who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."



## SERMON IV, 1889

### COMPLICITY WITH CRIME

*But they said—"What is that to us? See thou to that."—Math. 27: 4.*

CANON FARRAR, writing of the intense terrific experience of Judas, says this—"There is in a great crime an awfully illuminating power." It reveals the downward trend of the soul. It shows whither its appetites and passions are driving it and suggests to one not set in evil ways the necessity of resisting them. I recently heard one tell how the surprise of a single drunken revel discovered to him the danger of indulgence and led him to form the purpose he had faithfully kept never to let intoxicating liquors pass his lips again. In the light of one disgraceful act he read the truth that in abstinence only is there safety.

Sometimes there is bitter anguish connected with the disclosures made by a single crime. It is a painful glare that it creates under which the soul cries out. The conscience is roused from its sleep and thick and fast fly its sharp, piercing arrows.

See yon electric light above the street. In the distance it flashes like a diamond. As you pass under it, how strong is the light, how distinct are the shadows on the pavement beneath your feet! How it waxes and wanes! how it sputters and flares and then burns with a steady, strong white light. Such a glaring, raging, intense light is kindled in the soul by the commission of a grave offense. Such a light is conscience when startled into unwonted activity by a great crime. Judas went out from

that upper room where Jesus and the disciples ate the passover and "it was night"—night without and night within. But when the wicked transaction was made and its full consequences began to appear, no night was dark enough to hide him from himself. Harrowing thoughts came trooping into mind and in his extreme agony he hurried back to the partners of his crime to get some relief if possible by confession, saying—"I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

"After my death," said Queen Mary of England, "you will find Calais written on my heart"—so great was her grief at its fall. So we might expect to find *Betrayal* written on the heart of Judas—written so indelibly that eternity itself cannot wear it out.

But what answer gave the chief priests and elders? Only yesterday they were glad to welcome him to their council and covenant with him for aid in accomplishing their wicked designs. Only last evening they accepted him as their ally and profited by the deceitful kiss with which he identified his Master. Surely he might now expect some slight recognition at their hands—if not sympathy with him in his sorrow, at least some pity of him in his misery. But no! The tools of wicked men are always cast off when they have served their purpose. Judas in his present mood could only hinder their hellish scheme and therefore they dismiss him with the pitiless answer—"What is that to us? See thou to that."

Yet were they not abettors of his crime? Had not they a share in the guilt of the betrayal? If Judas was the principal actor, were they not accessories? In spite of their bluff reply, was it not something to them that Judas betrayed innocent blood? Words cannot alter facts and facts concerning their relation to his crime fastened guilt upon them as well as upon him.

Let us notice first—

I. How we are partakers of the sins of others. Our



lives touch other lives and every point of contact gives opportunity of influence for good or evil, of communicating healthful, holy, inspiring impulses or of kindling appetites, passions and ambitions that drive men down to the pit. So sensitive is the soul to impressions from without that the most casual touch of a stranger's life may leave its mark upon it. How then can we measure the result of the necessary or cordial fellowship of years, especially the impressionable years of youth and early manhood or womanhood?

Our participation in the sins of others may be either great or small, active or passive, open or concealed. It may range from leadership in evil deeds to evil influence unconsciously exerted. It may be a positive, purposeful impact upon another soul, or only a silent contribution to the unwholesome atmosphere in which he lives.

He who *plans what another executes* is by way of eminence a sharer in the other's crime. However hid from view, he is the chief partner in the transaction and if brought to light should receive the greater condemnation. We hear men say—"He moulds the bullets and others shoot them." They compliment him for his smartness and in heart despise him for his meanness. Moulding bullets is a perfectly safe business, but shooting them exposes one to danger. Surely if execration be even lawful it ought to be hurled at the man who with brazen face and craven heart plots daring mischief for braver and less wicked men to accomplish. Let us withhold our indignation from the miserable agent who bribes another and bestow it on the principal who with greater villany prompts the wicked act. He who throws the bomb is only more fearless, not more fiendish than he who conceives and promotes the hellish plot against the lives and happiness of his fellows. One far away from the frightful scene of havoc may furnish the fertile brain and energizing will that brings it all to

pass. And is not he the arch-conspirator that deserves the heaviest penalty of all?

He who solicits another to do evil is likewise partaker of his evil deed. The tempter is more blameworthy than the tempted who actually commits the wrong. He says—"Come with us—Cast in thy lot among us," and by fair words and happy prospects lures into the evil path. Many an innocent one is thus ensnared and ruined and when the ruin is complete, what says he who laid the snare? Will he help him with kind words now and try to rekindle hope of better things to come? Will he take part of the burden of accusation upon himself and thus relieve the distressed, over-burdened spirit of him whom he misled? Or will he blame him for his weakness and remind him that "every man must bear his own burden"? Will he assume an air of innocence and mock his appeal for sympathy and say—"What is that to me"? True enough it is the duty of everyone to maintain his own integrity by resisting the enticements of sinners, but that does not in the least lessen the guilt of the enticer. You read in the Scripture—"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink," and you point to the liquor-seller and say—"There he stands. His eyes stand out with fatness and wealth is pouring in upon him. But God's curse is on him—on his estate, his family and his soul." You say only the truth. God's providence in multitudes of instances sanctions your assertion and eternity we fear will give it awful confirmation. But is this all the truth? Is the curse exhausted on the liquor-seller? What of him who follows the social custom of treating and says to his friend whom he meets—"Come, take a drink with me." What of him who sends for a gallon of whiskey and in some dark hole measures it out to his friends? Do not these equally with liquor-seller come under the fearful weight of this course—"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink,

that putteth thy bottle to him and makest him drunken."

He who indicates *approval* of another's evil deed partakes of his sin. If the approval is in word only, it none the less encourages and supports the man in his evil course. This approval may be shown by community of interest, by friendly intercourse, by uninterrupted companionship, during the time of its commission. It may be expressed in word and by no less significant act. It may be done considerately or idly, with bias of friendship or partizanship. But whenever there is approval of wrong-doing there is participation in the wrong and corresponding guilt.

Companionship is a most delightful social fact and yet it is not an unmixed blessing. It is a factor in evil as well as in good. Men do in companies what they would not do as individuals. They strengthen each other in carrying out an evil purpose. They cast temptations in each other's way and hinder sometimes the assertion of their better selves. Would that we all might bring this social element of our natures into service and make it add not only to our joys but to our virtues and victories over self and sin. Would it not be a high and noble ambition to be able to say when we separate from familiar haunts—"I leave my friends better than I found them and my enemies, if I have any, no worse."

Many other ways might be mentioned in which it is possible for us to become partakers of other men's sins. If my example is a false light on the shore; if I am an apologist for wickedness; if I by haughtiness or harshness provoke another to do evil; if I altogether keep silent when wickedness abounds; if I am a shield to the wrong-doer have I not a share in his ill-desert? Nay more. Are we not responsible for the whole sum of our influence over our fellows. Unconsciously we elevate or degrade those with whom we associate. We are either weights or wings. There is an aroma of real character that silently steals into other souls to refresh and bless

them. And from the false character just as silently and certainly there goes forth a deadly, blighting influence to all who come in contact with it. How solemn is the responsibility that is thus laid upon us as we mingle with others. The thought of it should prompt the daily prayer of everyone of us—"Teach me, O God, to live." Jesus forewarned his disciples of the risks of living in this strong statement—"It is impossible but that offenses will come but woe unto that man through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he be cast into the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones."

II. How vain the endeavor to rid ourselves of the fact of complicity. We would do so if we could. We even imagine we succeed in doing so and roundly assert that we are free. The chief priests had entered into conspiracy with Judas, or rather they had admitted him to the secret of a conspiracy they had already formed. They paid him a price to do the very act that so weighed upon his conscience afterward. They followed his act to its legitimate conclusion in the crucifixion of the master he betrayed. And yet when he came to them with troubled spirit they said—"What is that to us? See thou to that." But did that scornful answer make the slightest change in the fact of their complicity with his crime? If the thirty pieces of silver were a bribe received by Judas, they were at the same time a bribe given by the priests and bribe-giving and bribe-taking are equally heinous offences in the sight of God and good men. If he was a traitor, they promoted his treason beforehand and at the time took possession of the innocent man whom he delivered into their hand.

How easy it is for us to be deceived about ourselves. It is one of the amazing inconsistencies that we all observe that we cannot see in ourselves what we so readily blame in others. We must admit the fact whether we can explain it or not. We are blinded by self-interest

or self-love and our judgments concerning our own acts are comparatively worthless. There is of course a difference in persons. Some are more capable of candid unbiased criticism of themselves than others. Yet scarcely any can look with a perfectly single eye on his own faults. We are apt to invert the telescope so as to minify the object when we investigate our own sinfulness. So that everyone may fitly use the Psalmist's words — "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." Nor are those who are swift to judge others more likely to be impartial judges of themselves. If "those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones" it does not follow that those who do throw stones do not live in glass houses. The poet says — "They who credit crime are they who feel their own hearts weak to unresisted sin." And a distinguished essayist writes — "Those who see much to find fault with in others, and who are prone to magnify and dwell upon the shortcomings of their neighbors, are those who have an interest in depreciating the life and character around them. Men do not work for nothing." These declarations may be too sweeping and yet they may at least offset the false impression that condemnation of the wrongs of others is any evidence whatever of the perfect conduct of the censor.

Need I crave your pardon, my friends, if upon this occasion I touch upon the liquor question as often as the line of thought will allow? Even a digression for the purpose might be overlooked in such a time as this. But fortunately enough for me, the subject makes digression unnecessary. The liquor traffic, Judas-like, is guilty of innocent blood. It lays its treacherous, bloody hand upon the young men of our land and slays its thousands annually. Who is responsible for this? Temperance people have spent a good deal of time in the past in blaming one another. They have been saying to one another — "See thou to that!"



With the storm above us driving  
With the false earth mined below  
Who shall marvel if thus striving  
We have counted friend as foe  
Unto one another giving blow for blow?

To all this we have at least a truce and with one mind and one mouth we are pleading for prohibition. However we may have differed, we are now agreed that every man in this commonwealth has thrust upon him the responsibility of saying whether this carnival of blood shall continue or not. If he says it shall or fails to say by his vote and influence that it shall not, how can he rid himself of direct complicity with the accumulated crime of the liquor traffic. The line is squarely drawn between allies and supporters on the one side and opposers and enemies on the other and every man must choose his position with his eyes open. If we say to one another—"See thou"—let it be not to shirk our own duty but to spur others to the same good works we endeavor to perform. It is something to you and me that our boys are endangered in almost every town in the commonwealth. It is something to you and me that every year multitudes are swept down by the torrent of wickedness of which the liquor traffic is the source. And therefore it is something to you and me that it be outlawed—placed under the ban instead of as now under the benediction of law." "What is that to us?"—do you say. I answer—"It is everything we prize. We sum it up and say—" 'Tis God and home and native land."

III. There is no sin or suffering in this world of which the Christ-like man will say—What is that to me? We widen our thought now beyond those instances in which our own complicity should make us tender toward the sinner. Our sympathies should reach out to every penitent soul—to every sinning man or woman—to every stricken community.

For a long time we have been learning at the feet of Jesus what is the worth of man. We have been breaking the fetters from both body and mind so that he may work out his own destiny unhindered. We assert the right of every man to a free and fair chance in the race of life. "Break every yoke" is the cry — every yoke of law, custom or sentiment and let the imprisoned spirit of man go free. Let him accept the opportunities freedom gives and ask no more.

But is there not a companion truth that ought to be considered? Besides the doctrine of individualism we must place the doctrine of the solidarity of the race. We are members one of another. Liberty must walk hand in hand with fraternity. I am my brother's keeper. There is another lesson yet to be learned at the feet of Jesus. He did not so much emphasize self-assertion as self-surrender — not so much rights as duties. By teaching and example he set forth the glory of service. "Whosoever will be great among you let him be your servant." He never said to the busy population of Capernaum — Let the strongest survive and the weak perish. He commended the Good Samaritan, because he neither despised nor neglected but cared for and supported the weak. Never a cry came to his ears — of weakness or woe — that was not heeded. The bereaved Mother, the anxious publican, the young ruler, the fallen woman of Samaria, the thief on the cross — all were taken into his pity and received kind, honest, helpful treatment at his hands. Had even Judas gone to Jesus with his bitter wail of remorse instead of to the accomplices of his crime how different might have been his reception and humanly speaking his fate! Who can doubt that the word of Jesus that has buoyed many a sinking soul in all the centuries since it was uttered would have found in him a signal illustration — "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Did he not a little later look down from the cross on his



murderers and pray—"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Who among us can look with indifference on the fate of Johnstown? What a moment of awful agony it must have been to some, when the angry waters swept almost all they cared for on earth away from their embrace forever! What maddening suspense must have wrung the hearts of others who knew that friends were endangered and feared that they were lost! Could anyone among us have the want of heart to say—What is that to me?

Something more than a year ago the Synod of Pittsburgh met at Johnstown and two of us spent an evening with Rev. Dr. Beale, an old college friend, then pastor of the Presbyterian Church. On Tuesday I saw his name among the dead at Leechburg. But though not a friend was lost or sorrow-stricken did not the hearts of all of us swell with emotions of astonishment and grief as we read of the sudden, overwhelming destruction of our human brothers? Did we not all respond in heart and as we were able to the cry of the impoverished, sorrow-laden living? The unparalleled calamity was promptly followed by a liberality that knows no parallel outside of lands leavened by Christian influence. The thousands of rich men and the small gifts of the poor came pouring in from far and near to help these strangers who are bound to us by no other tie than that of the race. All hail! this blessed day when the kinship of men is honored, when one member suffers and all the other members suffer with it. The spirit of the song of the angels is abroad in the earth—"Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men."

Young gentlemen and ladies of the graduating class, take note of these signs of better things. Have faith in God. Have faith in the workings of divine grace in human souls. Coleridge paints by these few masterly strokes the poor blind pessimist—"The owlet Atheism

sailing on obscene wings athwart the moon, drops his blue-fringed lids and holds them closed, And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven, cries out, 'Where is it?' Let the atheist be a pessimist if he will — the darkness is his native haunt. Let him shut his eyes and hoot, when the sun dances joyously in the heavens and flings down radiance upon the earth. But let us who have faith in the Heavenly Father's government of the world, keep our eyes open to see all that is gladdening and beneficent in its history. Cultivate that serenity that comes from contemplation of the throne of the eternal. "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

Recognize the brightness there is in the world and endeavor to make it brighter. There are perils and miseries and sin. There are poverty and oppression and greed and lust and violence. There are "ragged children, with hungry eyes" for whom Mrs. Browning pleads —

If no better can be done,  
Let us do but this endeavor  
That the sun behind the sun  
Shine upon them while they shiver.

There are giant iniquities that must be smitten with the fist of righteous law. In many places yet Satan is unbound. To all these sad serious facts you must be awake. There is need of earnestness and patience as well as serenity and hope.

Mordecai rallied Queen Esther from her listlessness and called upon her to plead the cause of her doomed people — "Who knoweth whither thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this." And the queen answered nobly — "I will go in unto the King which is not according to law; and if I perish, I perish." Equally admirable are Mordecai and Esther — the burning zeal of the man and the self-sacrificing devotion of the

woman. Let us commend them to your imitation as you enter upon life with the purpose of serving God, and your fellow men.

Who knoweth whether you are coming to the Kingdom—the Kingdom of manhood and womanhood—for the times in which you live. Shirk not your responsibility nor seek to impose it upon others. Say not—"What is that to us? See thou to that." Rather press into the conflict with—"Here am I; send me." Make the world better by work under and in harmony with Jesus Christ who came to minister to others and to save the lost and count it reward enough if at the last you hear him say—"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me."

## SERMON V, 1890

### SOBER-MINDEDNESS

*Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.—Titus 2: 6.*

YOUTH is impetuous. Young men are ever ready to do exploits. They are charmed by the romantic and the heroic. The element of risk only gives zest to any enterprise. They respond promptly to any appeal that calls for daring. They are not appalled but rather attracted by the perils of missionary life in the heart of Africa, they deprecate most of all what is called a humdrum life—without excitement, without apprehension, and equally without expectation—a calm and placid sea unstirred by storm and scarce by gentle breeze. Few of them would understand Lord Shaftsbury who when urged to accept a high office, replied, “One million six hundred thousand operatives are still excluded from the benefits of the Factory acts, and so long as they are unprotected, I cannot take office.” Fewer still would understand Chinese Gordon, the hero of the century, when he wrote,—“Is it my fault or my failing that I never have a respectable assistant with me to bear a part of my labors? The men who would suit me are all more or less burdened with their families, etc.; those who are not so loaded, are for *money or great acts*, which do not accord with my views.”

Money and great acts are apt to be the ambition of the great majority. The ideas of serviceableness to man and submission to God, are far from dominating their lives. They respond to motives of glory rather than of duty, of gain rather than of godliness, of pleasure rather than of sacrifice.

Titus was left by Paul at Crete to set things in order. The people in general of all ages and sexes seem to have been blinded by sense and sloth. Paul quotes one of their own prophets concerning them,—“The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies,” and adds, “This witness is true.” Accordingly he gives Titus specific charges concerning the various classes that would compose his congregation. As the chapter has been read, you have noticed how similarly they are to be addressed, how substantially the same virtues are to be pressed upon them all —“that the *aged men* be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience,—the *aged women* likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness; that they may teach the young women to be sober, discreet, chaste, keepers-at-home, good.” And then follow these words concerning those whose employments are more likely to nourish the illusions of early life, “The younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.”

The word “likewise,” interpreted by the preceding verses, brings the younger women as well as the younger men within the scope of this exhortation and makes it appropriate enough as the basis of a closing word to young people of both sexes.

What is it to be sober-minded?

Let the white light of Scripture illuminate the answer. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night, but let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation.”

To be sober-minded is to live as the children of the day, to have our eyes open and our minds alert, to look the difficulties and dangers of our situation squarely in the face, to be well-girded and well-guarded with the Christian graces of faith, and love and hope. Viewed

in this wide sense sobriety takes in the whole discipline of Christian life. It particularly includes moderation to which Paul exhorts, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Likewise it includes temperance or self-control, of which Peter speaks, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance." It is a synonym for wisdom, that large-minded, long-sighted, practical wisdom that resists the tyranny of the present and considers the final outcome of one's acts, both here and hereafter. "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time." "In understanding be men."

Be sober! Need I utter a word of warning against the intoxicating cup? Who does not know the deadly poison it contains? Who has not witnessed the havoc of the demons set loose upon society by strong drink? See the drunkard's awful wreck of himself — of all the noble gifts with which his Creator has endowed him. His power of thought, of speech, even of locomotion, are overcome. He essays to go, and his feet refuse to do his bidding. He speaks, and his maudlin talk bewrays his besotted condition. His reason is dethroned and wild imaginations course through his mind unbridled. He casts away his opportunity of employment in any important task. He fills with the flush of shame the face of those who love him. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." My young friends, if you would escape these evils, you must not tamper with the cup that contains them. The "original package" cannot hurt the man whose unalterable purpose is to neither touch, taste, nor handle it.

Pass on now from the region of the physical, or psycho-physical, to that of the mind alone. Is there anything here corresponding to the intoxicant effects of which we have just spoken? Is it possible for one to



be sober in the ordinary sense, the eye clear, the step steady, the intellect bright, and yet not be sober-minded? Are the rightful rulers in the kingdom of the soul ever overthrown? Does prejudice ever warp the judgment, or interest ever silence the conscience? Is the soul ever frenzied with grief, or wild with passion, or drunk with excitement? Is there reason enough why we should all be urged to soberness of mind?

Let us select a few out of many suggestions contained in this comprehensive exhortation.

I. We commend to you sober-mindedness as one against the *sway of mere feeling*.

There is no doubt a place for feeling and for the experience of it. It is a false notion that emotion is to be constantly suppressed or hidden from view. Stolidity is very far from being strength. The strong man is the earnest man, whose very soul is on fire with devotion to a great cause.

"He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." That man is to be pitied who cannot feel, the fountain of whose emotions is sealed. He looks upon the beauties of nature and art without any glow of admiration within him. He walks through the fields of literature and is never regaled by the fragrance of its flowers. He hears burning words from the advocate of a great cause, and marks his stupidity at the close by a flippant remark at its expense. We pity him, though he perhaps will wrap the icy mantle of his independence about him, and fancy himself superior to the common mass whose souls respond to truth and right. For his superciliousness he needs our pity all the more, notwithstanding he deserves our blame.

Sometimes there is a vicious sentiment abroad concerning this. There is a sort of "*nil admirari*" school, whose members wish it to be known that they wonder at nothing, that they are interested in nothing. They especially try to repress every outward manifestation of



the emotions they feel. They incase themselves in a shell of propriety, or may be, of pugnacity. Would that we could dislodge such a false sentiment whereon it has fastened itself. It will cut a deep scar in the character of every man or woman who cherishes it. Says Ruskin: "The ennobling difference between one man and another is precisely in this, that one feels more than another." Right emotions are the springs of right action and right character, and ought, therefore, to be cultivated and shown without restraint. Let us not, however, suffer them to assume the place of government. While allowing the free action of the feelings, they must not usurp the throne of the soul, which is rightly occupied by reason and conscience. Yet, alas! too often in the history of all of us this true order of things is reversed. The feelings master us instead of being mastered. Scarcely a day passes in which the close observer of himself will not see this illustrated. We say we acted on the impulse of the moment. We mean that the feeling of tenderness or anger, of admiration or disgust, prompted us to do what our judgment disapproves.

Sometimes these feelings get a dominant and abiding sway. Anger ripens into hate; love into idolatry; tenderness into sickly sentimentality. It is no sudden burst of feeling, but a steady flow in a single direction, appearing as often as circumstances give occasion for its entrance.

See it where one is ruled by a malignant passion. I hate another. A single event excited my enmity, and henceforth all that he does is seen not merely in the light of the event, but of the ill-feeling it created. He does a worthy act, and I attribute to him an unworthy motive; he achieves distinction, and I give the credit of it to circumstances; he makes a misstep, and I denounce him without mercy. "Which of these was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" asked Jesus of the scribe. He would have choked in the attempt

to say, "the Samaritan." And, therefore, answered by phrase, "He that had mercy on him." Why do I mis-judge my brother man? Because there is a feeling in me that overrules my reason and makes me less than just. Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at me.

The same injurious supremacy of mere feeling may be seen in an opposite class. Not to speak of partialities of family, friendship, community or party, we notice what we may call indiscriminate tenderness. It seems to lean to virtue's side, and yet it is too boneless a thing to deserve the name of virtue; it grieves equally over the death of a pet canary and a darling child; it sheds tears at all graves, and sends bouquets to all criminals; mercy is its only plea, and justice, law and the general good are utterly ignored. Feeling has absolute sway and every dictate of right reason is swiftly set aside.

There is indeed no danger from a passion as long as it is kept subject to the proper ruling power of the mind. Only when it runs wild does it bring damage and disaster. Let it be harnessed to a worthy object, and under the guidance of an intelligent understanding let it speed on. The goal of achievement will be sooner won. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."

When reason, like a skillful charioteer,  
Can break the fiery passions to the bit,  
And spite of the licentious allies, keep  
The radiant tract of glory, passions then  
Are aids and ornaments.

II. We commend to you sober-mindedness as over against *self-will*. Paul writes to the Romans (12:3), "I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Among the qualifications for a bishop which he gave to

Titus (1:7), in this epistle is, "not self-willed." And Peter writes of certain ones of his time — anarchists of the first century — "Presumptuous are they, self-willed." Putting these passages together we learn that one of the evils resulting from not thinking soberly of ourselves is self-will, undue self-assertion.

He is indeed a pitiable object who lacks will — a mere reflection of another, a puppet or plaything in the hands of his friends. Will means force — strength to resist or to assail. Condemnation of self-will is quite in keeping with commendation of sturdy self-poise, of high moral purpose, often it is the highest exercise of righteous-will to overcome self-will. It is fighting the good fight of wisdom. Here is a great battle-ground with nearly all of us. We naturally like to have our own way, but sometimes we get ashamed of our selfishness and determine to conquer our own spirits; sometimes it dawns upon us that others have rights as well as we; sometimes we recognize the fact that the general interests demand permanent consideration. So we set ourselves with firm purpose to discipline ourselves unto obedience to the behest of duty. Self-will has supreme regard to self; strength of will has regard to an end in view. Had Speaker Reed's persistency been concerning a matter purely personal, he could not have so won the approval of others. But the end in view, the correction of what was believed to be a great abuse, made him in the eyes of his friends the hero of the hour.

When self-will displays itself in the common intercourse of life, it may be nothing more serious than disagreeableness. But when one occupies a representative position, it is fraught with danger to whatever large interests are involved. In the crises of our nation's history they are to be admired most who surrendered cherished notions for the common good, sinking personal prejudices, opinions, wishes, for the sake of the great end to be reached.

What a debt we owe to the men who composed the Federal Convention which framed our National Constitution. The Articles of Confederation had proved to be a snare. From all the States came men with their own views and State prejudices to frame a plan to remedy the acknowledged evils. There was long and earnest discussion, and little seemed to be accomplished, until even the courageous heart of Washington seemed ready to despair of any good results. There were great men in that convention; men such as Madison and Randolph, Hamilton and Franklin. They had opinions and dared to maintain them, but they were patient as well as candid, respecting their compatriots as well as themselves. They were awed by a sense of a great responsibility, and they held together till the demand of the hour was met by an agreement. Hamilton's words expressed the sober-minded spirit of many as he looked upon their completed work—"No man's ideas are more remote from the plan than my own are known to be; but it is possible to deliberate between anarchy and convulsion on one side, and the chance of good to be expected from the plan on the other."

William H. Seward, before the nomination of Lincoln, was the best known advocate of freedom in the land. Yet, in the early months of 1861, when secession was threatening, he stood in the Senate pleading solely for the Union, until his former friends began to criticize him for his timidity. In reply to a letter from his friend, Dr. Joseph P. Thompson, he gives the reasons for his course in a private letter, which was not published till eleven years had passed, and Mr. Seward had gone to his reward. He wrote: "Twelve years ago freedom was in danger and Union was not. I spake then so singly for freedom that short-sighted men inferred that I was disloyal to the Union. I endured this reproach without complaining, and now I have my vindication. Today, practically freedom is not in danger and Union is. Now,

therefore, I speak singly for Union, striving if possible to save it peaceably; if not possible, then to cast the responsibility upon the party of slavery. For this singleness of speech I am now suspected of infidelity to freedom. — Do not publish or show this letter. Leave me to be misunderstood. I am not impatient." Whatever opinion we may entertain concerning his course in those stormy days, must we not admire the faith, courage and self-forgetfulness that asked no vindication till the coming ages, that patiently accepted misunderstanding rather than jeopardize his country's weal?

It is not long since the commanding figure of Samuel J. Randall passed into the unseen world. No man who knew him will question his resolute will. But never was it more nobly employed than in the days of the Hayes-Tilden conflict. His own wishes, hopes, interests, convictions, were all in favor of Mr. Tilden. His party friends were clamorous for the rights of their favorite, but the cool head and iron will of one man carried the day for peace. Were these three men — Hamilton, Seward, Randall — ever more courageous than when each in his day subordinated self to the welfare of this land? Let us in our smaller spheres emulate their example. Let us set at least three limits to our self-assertion — the rights of others, the larger interests affected by our action, and the will of God.

III. We commend to you sober-mindedness as over against *unbelief*. We take now a longer view. We remember that there is a limit to this present life, and that eternity lies beyond. That other world that is eternal unbelief ignores, and is therefore mad.

There is a God. It is the fool who says in his heart, "There is no God." All God's works declare him, and only the lips of man have ever contradicted their testimony. Stanley comes out from the jungles of Africa to testify that the living God is a reality today, and hears prayer. He says — "I vowed a vow in the forest soli-



tudes that I would confess his aid before men." And the letter from which we quote is a partial fulfillment of the vow. And thousands more, not less trustworthy, though less compensated, confirm his testimony.

There is a Redeemer — the hope of Israel, the hope of mankind. Eighteen hundred years ago a noted prisoner stood before his prince to make his defense. There was a great company of military and civil officers and chief men of the city gathered to hear him. Undismayed — nay, rather stimulated by the splendid opportunity to utter the truth before kings, he gave with all the earnestness of conviction and loving purpose the reason for his hope. Boldly he announced the line of his defense — as "For the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers . . . I am accused of the Jews." He told of his former unbelief and enmity to the Lord Jesus, and how his mad career had been arrested by the vision of the Lord at midday, as he went to Damascus. He told of the command laid upon him to witness concerning these things to the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. "Whereupon," he declares, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision"; and "I continue unto this day witnessing . . . that Christ should suffer, and that he should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." And as he waxed warm in his proclamation of the gospel, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul answered with equal spirit and courtesy, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Which now of these two was mad — Festus or Paul? Which of these is sober-minded — the man of the world or the man of faith? Each as he looks from his own standpoint charges the other with folly. The worldling stands with his back on the future; the Christian has before his face both time and eternity. The worldling

stands in the plain; the Christian stands on the mountain top and looks out over the pleasant plain and over the mountains to the interminable stretches of his inheritance that lie beyond.

Some of you, maybe, believe with Paul and act with Festus. Is your folly less by reason of the difference between you and the heathen ruler? Nay, rather it is increased. If Jesus Christ is the hope of mankind as you confess — the only hope of your own soul, I beseech you do not neglect him. I would that every one of you were not only almost but altogether Christians. "Be wise today, 'tis madness to defer."

Young gentlemen and ladies of the graduating class of 1890, you are now looking out upon life as you never did before. The great world with its manifold activities seems just at hand. I have tried to present to you an idea of life as something serious. It is no holiday adventure, but earnest work, with some things to be borne. There is a grave responsibility of life. And yet it is a pleasant world we live in. You need not sit down under a juniper-tree and wish to die. We bid you be of good cheer and give good cheer. Take courage and give courage. First of all, be a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus. Then fear not the future, for it is in your Father's hand. If there are clouds, the light will shine through them. If there are trials, they do not abide. Time and the hour run through the roughest day. Especially you can brighten your own life by brightening life for some others. Help him over hard places, cheer him on the way. Coleridge relates an incident of Sir Alex. Ball and a very young midshipman. The latter in his first battle was trembling with fear, well-nigh panic-stricken, when Lieut. Ball took him by the hand and whispered, "Courage, my boy! Don't be afraid of yourself, you will recover in a minute or so." It was but a word — a timely word, but it saved him from dishonor, and was remembered ever afterward with



gratitude. May each of you in your first battles find some reinforcing friend, and in turn may you reinforce others. If we would do the utmost for God and humanity, we must join hands for mutual support. We must not waste force by standing in each other's way. Rise to the height of magnanimity that your religion and your life-work require. As sober-minded men and women, do earnestly and hopefully what your hands find to do, while you listen for the bugle-call of progress—the marching orders of the providence of God.

“The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

There is a fount about to stream,  
There is a light about to beam,  
There is a morning twilight broadening unto day,  
Men of thought and men of action lead the way.

Go forth with your face toward the better time coming, and do what you can to hasten it, and may the blessing of God go with you.

## SERMON VI, 1891

### OBEDIENCE

*Obedient unto death.—Phil. 2: 8.*

WE hear much in the present concerning the reign of law. Modern science makes us familiar with the idea of law in the material universe. So wide and comprehensive are its generalizations that it affirms the existence of a law that embraces within its scope all gradations of matter, life and mind, from star-dust to man, from the deep sea ooze to the gigantic mind of a Plato or a Webster.

But what is law? Is it an independent entity? Is it self-existent, self-sustained, self-determined? Is it blindly dominant, without origin, without purpose? Is there not a law-giver behind the law? Paley is right when he says — Law presupposes an Agent.

But if law implies an agent in one view it also implies a subject in another. If a law-giver is a correlative of law in one direction, obedience is its correlative in another. Obedience is neither more or less than conformity to law. You bring together oxygen and hydrogen and in accordance with the law of chemical combination in fixed proportions, the obedient elements unite to form water. You strike an ivory ball against another and in obedient rebound it flies in the precise direction required by the law of incidence. The mysterious law of gravitation holds its silent sway over the obedient stars and suns and systems. Men stand in admiring awe before the majesty of law as with unvarying uniformity it ramifies and reigns over the entire universe.

How strange it is that they so admire the obedient

earth and the obedient sky and care so little for the obedient soul. Would that we could make it clear to you that the rational obedience of an immortal man is not less but more admirable than the unbroken allegiance of the spheres—that the moral law ought to reign supreme over every moral agent in every moral act and only so far as he is in heart and life conformed to it is the highest end of his being attained.

How can we be brought to realize this truth to which we will readily assent? Precepts fail to give us vivid conception of the excellence of duty or to attract us to it. Let us rather *look upon a man* embodying the divine ideal, illustrating the beauty of goodness by a blameless life, magnifying the law and making it honorable. Where shall such an attractive example be found? There has been but one faultless man in all the ages. In the judgment of friends and foes alike his place among men is unique. He stands on a moral level higher than Socrates or Seneca, Buddha or Mahomet, Luther, or Washington. While denying the supernatural, the rationalistic critics of Christianity are constrained to repeat the declarations of Pilate concerning the character of Jesus—"I find no fault in this man." Reman says—"He is the uncomparable man, to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of the Son of God, and this too with justice."

He was indeed more than a perfect man as Reman with apparent unconsciousness declares, but his example of obedience is glorified by the fact that he is also the Son of God. See him subordinating, suppressing, veiling his Deity—becoming a real man, subject to law. He "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God but emptied himself, taking form of a servant."

All this was preparatory to the obedience which he rendered. Clothed now with all the attributes of humanity he lived his life, did his work, died his death. And what was the essential quality, the distinguishing glory

of it all. It may be expressed in a single word — Obedience. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

I. His complete obedience to God. His soul responds at once to every intimation of the divine will. It is sensitive as the needle that trembles with unerring, unhampered impulse to the pole, steady as the full of the moon that lifts the rising tide at its established time. His guiding star was the will of Him that sent him. Subjection to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, the fulfilment of all righteousness in the observance of divine requirements, the execution of his appointed mission — these constitute the purpose of his life which was ever present and pressing on to realization. At the Washington Centenary in New York, President Harrison said of Washington in happy phrase — "He was the incarnation of duty." With a vastly larger significance the words might be applied to Jesus, who though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

If we look at him on the planes of home and citizenship, what an example of filial and civil obedience he furnishes us. That single incident of his childhood in which he appears talking with the doctors at Jerusalem and coming into clear consciousness of his divine mission, only forms a background to bring out in bolder relief his subsequent subjection to his parents. He left the city with its enlarging views and congenial fellowship to return to the despised village of Nazareth to work in the carpenter shop of his father and do his daily bidding. He recognized the divine arrangement by which parents are made the governors of their children and by his example sanctioned beforehand the words of Paul — "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."

His relation to civil authority is of like character.

He was no anarchist attacking the foundations of social order. He was no revolutionist except as his radical ideas were revolutionary in individual souls and as the centuries pass, in the world. He would not consent to be a King. He was crucified because he would not play the worldly part which the Jews expected of him. He wrought a miracle in order to pay the tribute to the Roman government. He was "subject not only for wrath, but for conscience sake"—not from fear of the penalty of the law but from filial fear of God. "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar or not?"—asked his enemies. They thought to entrap and entangle him, but he astonished and silenced the hypocrites by his candor. His loyal soul gave prompt response and the questioners marvelled and went their way. But that admirable answer, setting forth the duty and the limits of subjection to the powers that be, putting God both behind human authority and above it has been echoing down the ages ever since and was never more clearly heard than now—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's."

But let us now consider his direct relation to God. Let us enter into the inner sanctuary and see how he thinks and feels concerning God. What does he think of his revealed will in the Old Testament? Does he assume the rôle of a "higher critic" and minimize its worth? Or does he show the deepest solicitude about its fulfillment to the last jot or tittle? Is he jealous of any invasion of his prerogative? Or does he make haste to take the place of a servant? Does he with wanton independence break through the hedge of divine commands and purposes? Or does he bring every thought into subjection to the will of the Father? Everyone of you, familiar with the life of Christ as contained in the Gospels knows what is the only answer that can be made to these questions. And yet it may be that you have not

fully realized the fact that obedience to the Father was the very key-note of that brief life that has so changed the face of the world.

What does he say of himself? Let us listen to his own testimony. As about some simple, familiar air the musical genius gathers endless variations, while the central melody gives direction to the intricate whole and ever and anon rises to the surface to charm the listener, so does the thought of the Father's will permeate the whole wondrous life of the Redeemer, while ever and anon it comes out into clear and distinct utterance of his lips. You can hear it in these words to his Mother — Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? or in my Father's house? You can hear it in these cheery words from the weary traveller at the well of Sychar. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." You can hear it in these answers to his cavilling foes — "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me" — "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." Everyone of these passages declares in almost identical phrase the animating purpose of all his actions. "The will of him that sent me" — "the will of the Father" — "his work" — "those things that please him"; it is the same sweet strain of obedience that is heard in them all. Then as the end draws nigh and he anticipates the complete fulfilment of his purpose we hear him addressing the Father and making the triumphant claim — "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do — a claim repeated a few hours afterward as with his expiring breath he cried to God and men — "It is finished."

Besides all this direct testimony how many indirect



intimations we have of an obedient spirit! How often the name of the Father falls from his lips! It is the unconscious manifestation of his affectionate loyalty. More than a hundred times in a single Gospel — the Gospel of John — do we find a record of his reverent use of this endearing name. With what manifold variation is the central strain thus wrought into the several parts. Listen and see how the Father is ever uppermost in his mind — “I am come in my Father’s name and ye receive me not” — “I honor my Father and ye do dishonor me” — “I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman” — “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” And when he is about to leave the world, his way of expressing it is — “I go to the Father and after his resurrection with his thoughts still turning spontaneously in the same direction he says to Mary Magdalene — “I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

What further evidence do we wish? If anything need be — can be added — it is contained in the fact declared in our text. He became *obedient unto death*. The faithful and true Witness sealed his testimony with his blood. Like the soldier who abides at his post when the well-aimed missiles of the enemy fly about him — obedient unto death. Like the Pompeian guard, standing erect till the descending shower of hot ashes covered him where he stood to be revealed by the excavators of later centuries the eloquent monument to his own fidelity, obedient unto death.

But is this all? Was death only the outer limit — the golden clasp of his obedient career? Was it nothing more than martyrdom for the truth? Was he only a passive subject? Was he not obedient in his death? Was not his death a part of his obedience? Was it not the very climax of his active obedience, the culminating act of his execution of the will of the Father? Could we have positive action asserted more clearly than in

these words of Jesus? —“ Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh from me but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” He was not torn in pieces by the relentless forces of evil, but surrendering himself to their hand he laid down his life at the Father’s bidding. Yea in the very act of his final surrender to death his action is clearly seen as he “cried with a *loud voice* and *yielded up* his spirit.”

The obedience of Jesus, notwithstanding infirmities of the flesh, notwithstanding constant contact with the vice of his time, notwithstanding attacks of men and devils, through all his years, through all he did and said and thought, through every purpose, imagination and feeling, was unfaltering, unswerving, absolutely perfect, receiving the highest possible sanction in his resurrection from the dead by his own and the Father’s hand.

II. Let us now in the second place consider the attractive example which his obedience furnishes to his followers.

We do not forget that Christ’s perfect obedience is even more intimately connected with our salvation. He is an Atoner as well as an Exemplar, the obedience of the cross laying the foundation of our hope. By its inexhaustible merit the believer is justified before God. Paul’s statement to the Romans (5: 19) is pertinent and sufficient —“ As by one Man’s disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

But we choose at this time to confine our thoughts to Jesus as an example. In this we are warranted by the introducing context —“ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who . . . being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” It is the obedient

*mind* that is commended to our imitation. We are not to reproduce the circumstances but the spirit of his life. We might live in Galilee, gather about us the fishermen of the lake, retire betimes to the solitude of the mountain, wander about from place to place—in short, copy many external details of the Redeemer's life and yet have none of his spirit; on the other hand we may abide in a palace like Joseph, or languish in prison, like Bunyan, or lie on an invalid's couch like many of God's purest saints and have the mind of Christ without any outward likeness to his life. Dr. Arnold of Rugby tells of a saintly sister who for twenty years was confined to a crib, never changing her position for all that time, in this enthusiastic way—"I never saw a more perfect instance of the spirit and power of love and of a sound mind, intense love, almost to the annihilation of selfishness; a daily martyrdom for 20 years, during which she adhered to her early formed purpose of never talking about herself—enjoying everything lovely, graceful, beautiful, high-minded, whether in God's work or man's, with the keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fullness of the promise; and preserved through the very valley of the shadow of death from all fear or impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's glorious work. May God grant that I may come within one hundred degrees of her place in glory." That was no slavish copy but a real imitation of the self-emptying example of Jesus.

Our obedience, like Christ's, should be *constant*. His was rooted in love—love to the Father whose will was obeyed, love to the law which was the expression of his will. He could have compassion on the weakness of others, but he could not be tolerant of anything less than perfection in himself. Without blushing or effrontery he could challenge his hearers—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" As youth and man, whether obscure or popular or persecuted, he always did what

pleased the Father. So the obedience of believers should flow steadily on from year to year — from day to day. Out of an unfailing spring of love to Christ it should descend into the ways of life. Said Chalmers of an elder who died of cholera in Glasgow — “Instead of saying that he labored I should say that he *luxuriated* in well-doing.” Love makes obedience a luxury instead of a task. “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” In silent days of retreat as well as in the throng of business, on the journey as well as in the home, at midnight’s holy hour as well as in the glare of day, there is a silken cord binding him to the throne of God and the line of duty.

The shallow critics of John Howard, the philanthropist, found fault with him because he could go to Rome and neglect its splendid art. But what was the secret of his neglect? Was it indifference or rather self-denial? It was the act of a soul wedded to a single purpose, using every hour to accomplish it, resisting every attraction to turn aside. The sarcasm of the essayist is only too just when he says — “Such a sin against taste is very far beyond the reach of common saintship to commit.” Common saintship may criticize but cannot approach the magnificent self-surrender of Howard. It may sneer at him as narrow, as the shallow brook might sneer at the mill-race that runs the machinery, that grinds the grain. There is a narrowness of vision, of prejudice that means ignorance. But there is also a narrowness of concentration that means power. Howard’s neglect had a precedent in Paul’s at Athens, when his soul was stirred, not by the marks of its intellectual supremacy but by its abounding idolatry and ignorance of God. “This one thing I do,” was the motto of both Paul and Howard and it was a splendid reflection of that of the Master — “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day.” Our obedience, like Christ’s, should also be *joyful*. His was free and unconstrained as the song of the

bird. He was eager for every requirement of his mission. "Then said I, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will O my God, yea thy law is within my heart." He bounded forward to the duty of every time. When his hour was come he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, undeterred by the knowledge that Gethsamane and the cross were before him.

If we could only have something of the same spirit, the same ungrudging, untrammelled, hearty subjection to God, what a pleasure obedience would become! We would be ready for any service, equally ready for any sacrifice.

The spirit of obedience is perfectly consistent with the bounding spirit of liberty. Queen Mary had no more loyal subjects than the liberty-loving Knox and his compeers. But liberty is not license. True liberty is married to righteous law and cursed be he who seeks to put them asunder. What idle talk we hear! "I must be free"—I refuse to surrender my liberty—I will submit to no yoke—I glory in my independence." What does it all mean? Is law outgrown? Is liberty gone mad? Has the spirit of independence dethroned God? Do men mean to disregard all authority human and divine? Emphasize individuality as over against the shackles of caste and outworn dogma and tyrannous precedent but surely not against the law and truth and right. Let the individual reason be subject to truth and the individual conscience be subject to right. To the mind of Webster no thought seemed so great as that of responsibility to God. And to a soul rightly attuned, no pleasure can equal that of glad surrender to the guidance and government of Him to whom we are responsible.

"Whosoever committeth sin," says Jesus, "is the bond-servant of sin." Sin enslaves; obedience emancipates. How pitiable the abject victim of lust or envy, of wrath



or pride, who says —“ I hate my chains but I cannot break them.” He only is the Lord’s free man who can bid Satan — Get thee hence! and sing with David, “ O how I love thy law — thy law is better unto me than thousands of silver and gold.”

Let it be admitted that they who worship the spectacular will not be attracted by such a life as Christ led. Ribbons and parades and huzzas draw them. Gorgeous Herod is their idol rather than the modest Christ. They must be conspicuous or they are nothing. But true greatness can walk in quiet paths. It can abide alone with God. If need be, it can do without the world’s homage. It can be zealous and not say with Jehu —“ Come see my zeal.” It is belittled in its own eyes when it becomes conscious of mere self-seeking. It blushes for shame when its inward thought is — Behold me! Behold me! It says to itself —“ seekest thou great things for thyself; seek them not.”

Let it be your ambition to shine like the stars with a steady light, rather than to blaze like a meteor that only startles for the moment. Be ambitious to fulfill your appointed destiny, to fill as large a place as God has made you for and fill it full with worthy service rather than empty announcements. “ That which makes us men,” said a distinguished bishop recently, “ is the capacity for regarding the eternal.” If you would be men, see that you do not lose this capacity in mere pleasure-seeking and money-getting. Carry God and the moral law into whatever calling you enter. True manliness springs from “ seeing Him who is invisible” and bending our souls into harmony with his holy will.

Ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1891, I shall be glad if I have been able to fasten anew in your minds the thought of obedience, commended to you by the example of Jesus. I trust you will go forth to be law-abiding citizens, faithful husbands or wives,—above all to be loyal subjects of our Peerless Chief — Jesus of



Nazareth. Count it not beneath you to sit at His feet and learn. Think it no infringement of your liberty to be hedged about by the Ten Commandments. Ask no longer tether-line, no larger sphere than the will of God allows you.

First of all be obedient to the command of the Gospel —“ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” That will settle the question of your salvation and leave you free to serve him further with a loving, willing mind. Then wait upon him for orders. Raise every day the question — What wilt thou have me to do? To the call of Providence —“ Whom shall we send and who will go for us? let your heart respond —“ Here am I; send me.” Keep in touch with Christ, like Enoch walk with God and whether in the Gospel ministry or in secular callings, in our own or in other lands, fulfil the duty of the time and the hour.

Are you attracted by the thought of doing good to others? Do you long to be serviceable to mankind and whether recognized or unrecognized to be among the world's benefactors according to your measure? The story of Jesus grandly illustrates the fact that service to man and obedience to God are only different phases of the same thing — of one life.

Within sight of the shore of Africa, the English vessel, *Birkenhead* went down to the bottom of the sea with 450 men on deck. Called suddenly from their hammocks they were apprized of the danger that was imminent. The boats were only sufficient to save the women and children and before they could return to rescue the men the awful catastrophe was sure to come. Yet the command came to the men —“ Fall in on deck by companies,” and with sublime heroism as soon as they knew what it all meant they obeyed instantly with scarce an exception. The Captain's wise order secured the safety of all the women by the self-sacrifice of the noble men. The path of obedience was the path of glorious

service. The captain of our salvation is in command and the world is sinking to its doom. How shall the helpless ones be saved? Let us wait on the orders of our Commander. Let us go down with him into the depths.

My young friends, be obedient unto him and all will be noble and well with you. Be obedient unto him and your life will be a continuous blessing unto others. Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life for a ransom for many." "Let this mind be in you which was also in him."

## SERMON VII, 1892

### THE IMPORTANCE OF WORDS

*By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.— Math. 12: 37.*

MEN talk of *empty words* and no doubt much of conversation and public speech affords illustration of their meaning. Yet is it not rather the empty mind that gives character to speech? We are apt to deceive ourselves with the thought that there is some inherent emptiness in words. As Hobbes utters it — “Words are wise men’s counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools.” But are they mere counters with no intrinsic value? Are they not the recognized currency in the world of intellect, the medium of exchange, having a substantial basis of thought? Are they fools who suppose that their words convey actual value?

Words and ideas are counterparts of each other and to make the one antagonistic to the other is to separate chief friends, yea even to divorce the wedded after they have long and lovingly dwelt together.

If a word is regarded as a mere combination of signs or sounds, a thing of sense only, no wonder its importance is undervalued. But if its symbolic character is discerned and behind the signs and sounds we see the lines and shades of thought and feeling, the clear distinctions of reason, the sweep of imagination, the play of fancy or of impulse, the rugged outline of purpose, if it stands for all that takes place within and between two worlds, the world of nature and the world of man, a word becomes a thing of supreme value and almost of reverence. They who have said seemingly extravagant things concerning

words have been nearer the truth than they who have belittled them. They have been mighty forces in the world's life. "Syllables govern the world," is the sweeping statement of the learned Selden. "Words make truth to spangle and its rays to shine," said John Bunyan and his own writings give sufficient proof of it. Solomon's high estimate of the importance of words appears both in his condemnation of the evil and his commendation of the good. How true to life is this — "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword." And how charming is the familiar picture which this verse contains — "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver." But in our text we have the authoritative declaration of Jesus. He leads us out beyond the present influence of what is said, beyond the power of words in past or current history. He quickens our sense of responsibility for our words by confronting us with the eternal judgment and assuring us — "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

I. A man's words are the chief exponent of himself.

An exponent is that which sets forth or fitly represents that for which it stands. A standard-bearer may or may not be a true exponent of his party. He may be a man of principle, while his supporters may be only hungry for the spoils. Or he may be the fittest man of his time, the beau-ideal to embody the sentiment that reigns in the breasts of his fellow-reformers. In this sense a man's words, taken as a whole, flowing out spontaneously, inevitably from within, are the exponent of the man.

We sometimes bring words and acts into comparison to the great advantage of the latter and rightly too in many a single instance. Your liberal gift to the needy shows more than your strong commendation of a philanthropic effort. But after all, is not the real contrast between profession and practice — between seeming and being? A *deed* may be a pretense; a *word* may be nobly

sincere. One may give to be seen of men and another may speak to the glory of God. Either word or deed in an isolated case may misrepresent the man. Yet words and deeds alike are the natural indices of character and either, in the mass of what is said or done, at home or abroad, in private or in public, to friend or foe, will reveal the soul within.

Have you ever thought how much of your life is taken up with speaking or hearing, writing or reading words? You read the scriptures or the newspaper, the story or oration; you write a letter or a brief or a prescription or a sermon. You meet your neighbor and you exchange salutations. You visit your neighbor and you chat about the old times and the new, the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears and soul is revealed to soul through transparent speech. The community assembles and grave problems of public improvement and public safety are discussed. It may be a case of village improvement. We remove unsightly things, plant trees and shrubs and flowers, beautify our streets and residences as if moved by one common impulse. We say our deft fingers and muscular arms and strong shoulders have done it. But the first digging and planting and ornamenting were done by words, words of invitation to assemble, words of suggestion, quickening and hope when assembled. Purpose and plan were born of kindly, earnest discussion in which as iron sharpeneth iron so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Prov. 27: 17.

Think over any particular day of your life at its close and what is it that responds promptly to memory's call? A conversation, a remark spoken or heard, maybe a prayer. Some word of another rankles in your breast, or maybe conscience lashes you for an ill word spoken by your own lips. Some appreciative word has spread sunshine through your soul or some timely, happy word of yours has wrought good to men or service to truth or glory to God.

Ah! how divine a gift is speech! It is the bond and spur and glory of the human race. "This," says Max Muller, "is the Rubicon the brute has never crossed." What a dull and spiritless thing life would be if men, aye and women too were mute and all this delightful intercourse of thought and experience were brought to an end.

Not only do words constitute a large part of one's activity but that part which is most distinctive of him as an individual. They reveal his personality as nothing else can do. The salient features, the distinguishing characteristics will impress themselves on his language. As the Saviour expresses it—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak," and the obverse statement of that truth is that the utterance of the mouth will declare the abundance of the heart.

It is true of a nation that we may infer its character from its phraseology. Tell us what are the dominant words of a people and we know what dominates their life. We sometimes compare the English and the French for example. Duty, pluck, fair play are the watchwords of the one, glory, brilliancy are the words of admiration of the other and in them we read the prevailing spirit of each. 'Tis said we Americans worship smartness and money and I fear our words of common use would sustain the uncomplimentary assertion.

And what is true of nations and races and communities is equally true of individuals. Carlyle writes of Luther in this way, "Richter says of Luther's words—his words are half battles. They may be called so. The essential quality of him was that he could fight and conquer, that he was a right piece of human valor." In short his words were charged with his essential quality and therefore rightly characterized as half battles. Grant too summarized and set forth his own character in a few tremendous phrases that are as familiar as household words. "No terms except unconditional and immediate



surrender can be accepted." "We will fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." "Let us have peace." Each one is a photograph of the man, a front or side view of one whose quiet, rugged strength all the world admired.

If the intimate correspondence between words and character seems more marked in these than in ordinary instances it is only because the personality is more marked. Everywhere the correspondence exists. Even though one study concealment his most ordinary speech will betray him. No matter whether many or few, whether guarded or unguarded, his words open windows through which we can look into his very soul. The thoughts within press for utterance and the heart is laid bare ere he is aware of it. There are indeed Sphinx-like persons, human enigmas, who are unknown by their fellows, but even in such a case the enigma is in the person and his words announce correctly enough his nature. There goes a noted reformer, an advocate of all "sweetness and light," but a surly, ill-mannered remark at a railway station shows that he partakes of the nature of the bear as well as of the angel. Hear another prate of refinement yet ever complaining of scanty income and constant appeal and you are quite sure that sordid, unrefined greed is his ruling passion. Hear another impatiently claiming everything as his own and you know he is either a baby or a bully. So might we go over human traits without limit and say to their possessors — "Surely thou art thus and so, for thy speech bewrayeth thee." It would be interesting to show farther how words impress one's personality on others. Speech not only reveals but conveys thought and purpose. It is the grand medium of influence. Even a casual word may either rescue or ruin another. It may set in motion a wave of influence from soul to soul that will never reach the farther shore but keep on and on through eternity.

A dreamer dropped a random thot — 'Twas old and yet  
'twas new,  
A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true,  
It shone upon a genial mind and lo! its light became  
A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a monitory flame,  
The thought was small, its issue great — a watch-fire on  
the hill,  
It sheds its radiance for a dawn, and cheers the valley  
still.

A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged the daily  
mart  
Let fall a word of hope and love, unstudied from the  
heart;  
A whisper on the tumult thrown, a transitory breath  
It raised a brother from the dust, it saved a soul from  
death.  
O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought at  
random cast!  
Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last.

II. The place of words in the judgment, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

In what way will words justify or condemn? Just in the same way as works do. John's vision is of a great white throne before which stand great and small to be judged out of the things written in the books *according to their works*." Words are works. Neither will make men righteous before God. Let us hold fast to this that the only ground of justification is the obedience and blood of the Redeemer. But both words and works do manifest the state of the heart. Words have a moral character which makes them deserving of the scrutiny of the judgment. The element of will enters into them

with varying force from well-nigh unconscious consent to the strong purpose of an Apollyon or a Gabriel. So competent a witness as Professor Whitney says concerning language in general—"Not one item of any existing tongue is ever uttered except by the will of the utterer; not one is produced, not one that has been produced or acquired is changed except by causes residing in the human will." If this be true of all speech it is emphatically so of that which crosses or coincides with the moral law. There is an accentuation of will when men come to choose between right and wrong and fix their choice by declaring it in words. How incalculable is the distance! how wide and awful the gulf between one who could say of Jesus—"Crush the wretch!" and one whose love of Jesus and his truth burned as a consuming fire and prompted the exclamation—"Give me Scotland or I die."

Not only will men's words because of their moral character be *matter* of judgment but *evidence* in judgment. The design of the judgment is manifestation as much as decision. It is to vindicate the ways of God to the universe. Words are outward signs, the visible proofs, a part of the evidences of character in accordance with which the righteous are acquitted and the wicked condemned.

We dare not be indifferent to the words we speak, if we have any regard to the account we must render. Playful words indeed may serve an earnest purpose, but idle, useless, unholy words are marks of the condemned and danger-signals of the judgment.

Every man will be considered by himself, apart from his respectable position, from upholstered pew and pompous gift, from stocks and bonds, from station and influence. Every accident of earth will be stripped away and naked, alone, the soul will stand to be judged. Every man shall bear his own burden and that alone—"By thy words" shalt thou stand or fall.

III. Some classes of words that specially show the character and determine the issues of a perfect judgment.

Have your words been reverent or irreverent? Have you lightly spoken the names of God and Jesus Christ? Have you trifled with his word? Have you sacrilegiously tipped your arrows of wit with scripture phrase? Have you sought to provoke laughter by quotation of sacred words in untimely and incongruous ways? Have you followed, afar off it may be, that arch-blasphemer who causes roars of laughter in treating the serious holy theme — What must I do to be saved?

There is a kind of profanity to which minds of the brighter sort are prone. The snare is insidious because the sin is condoned by those whose instincts are shocked by profanity in its ruder form. The temptation is strong because of the self-exaltation that usually accompanies any sally of wit. But does it any less reveal an irreverent mind. At least temporarily the sense of God is weakened, or else the love of God is wilfully overborne by love of fun. Such irreverent sport may cause a ripple of satisfaction to pass over the company who listen, but what does God think of it? Will not He count his honor sacrificed for a petty triumph? Will He not regard as an insult to Himself what thoughtless friends have regarded with approval?

All this and more is true of common swearing. Alas, that it should be so common. You can scarcely spend an hour in any public waiting room without being compelled to hear profane words. The presence of the friends of God is ignored. What matters it that their hearts are wounded by the vain use of God's name! Apart from its gross immorality, the impoliteness of it is inexcusable. Why do men swear? Not for gain, for there is none. It looks like wanton, unrewarded disregard of God. It adds nothing to personal dignity. It adds neither elegance nor force to speech. It advertises intellectual poverty that makes up in sound what is lack-

ing in sense, that resorts to oaths because strong right words are wanting. I was glad not long ago to read this sentence in the personal memories of Grant, "I am not aware of ever having used a profane expletive in my life."

But that which gives momentous importance to these words is that the Lord will not hold him guiltless who uses them. They are the signs of an impious mind. God is not in all the thoughts. Men heap imprecations upon others, only to bring down heavy judgments upon themselves. There may be no lightning stroke to record at once the Divine displeasure. But sooner or later his threatening will be fulfilled—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

Are your words clean or unclean? Pure or impure? Vulgarity is less impious but more debasing than profanity, even the hearing of vile words gives the soul a lingering taint. We dare not listen lest we be defiled. We speak of the deadly miasma. It enters into the blood and reaches to every part of the body. For a time, under favorable conditions of place and season, it may seem to be eliminated. But how often it re-appears with greater virulence than before. With vicious tenacity it clings to its victim, slumbering for awhile but waking betimes to assail with accumulated energy. Such a deadly poison do unpure words inject into the soul. They defile the imagination, the conscience, the affections. Time and wholesome influences and the spirit's cleansing power may do much to remove their slimy marks. But the traces are never wholly gone and alas they often surprise us by coming into sudden distressing relief. My young friend, flee, as from the plague, from the man of foul mouth. Let none paint pictures on the chambers of your soul that years hence you will seek in vain to remove. Above all do not yourself besmear the pure soul of another by filthy conversation. Blush for shame if you ever catch yourself using words with double meaning. Count it an in-



sult if another presumes that you draw no line between the facetious and the vile. There is a low coarse wit that revels in impurity, that appeals to all that is vile in the listener. It flatters the intellect maybe, while discounting and destroying the moral character. Avoid it, discountenance it, have no fellowship with it, turn from it and pass away. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know them that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

We might illustrate further by words of truth or falsehood. Lying is almost wholly a thing of words. Yet how much it reveals of character. It means untrustworthiness, dishonor, ruin. Organized society is impossible in a community of liars. Its constituents have no more coherence than a pile of sand. Let us cultivate a sensitiveness like that of the magnetic needle with reference to truth, that will instantly correct the slightest divergence.

Words of kindness or malignity are also important indices of character. "Kind words can never die," we say, and a like immortality belongs to the unkind. Love is the greatest thing in the world and love speaks, cannot but speak, out of the heart's deep affection, words of praise to God and blessing to man. Hate too like a bitter spring pours forth of its abundance bitter envious words. Every man is continually describing himself by what he says of others. What a paradox is the tongue of man. It is his glory and anon his disgrace. In speech how like an angel; in speech how like a demon! Therewith bless we God even the Father; and therewith curse we men which we made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.

The phonograph registers and reproduces the sounds which it receives. It catches the weeping of a child, the



whine of a dog, the cheer of the crowd, the shout of victory, the strains of music, the eloquent sentences of the orator, and gives forth each again with such exactness that recognition is easy and immediate. The individual is reproduced and seems to say—"I am with you once again." As the invention is perfected we may expect results of more wondrous accuracy. Yet in its full perfection it will but foreshadow the perfect reproduction of the judgment. How it will startle one to hear again before the universe his own angry retort, his own lewd talk he would not now have published for the world, his own refusal to do good, his own branded falsehood. How it will delight one to have recalled the words he spake to serve the right, to cheer the desponding, to bind up the broken-hearted, to honor the Lord. "Then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Young ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1892. Pleasant intercourse have we had with you by reason of this divine endowment of which we have been speaking. Your main business here has been to learn how to use it with readiness and effectiveness. You go out from us let us believe not only with minds trained to think but with skill to express your thoughts clearly and forcefully. By your words you will impress yourselves on your generation. You dare not be careless about them. You must be circumspect in speech as well as in walk. An operator of whom we read failed once to give the appointed signal and the on-rushing train carried those on board into awful destruction. It was more than he could bear and thenceforth his maddened cry was, "O, if I only had." Who can tell the possible damage of a word spoken! Who can tell the possible loss of a word unspoken. Perhaps the wails of some lost soul will be,

when the histories and destinies of men are known — Oh, if I only hadn't, or, Oh, if I only had spoken. May no such vain lament be uttered by any one of you.

The Psalmist tells of some who say — "With our tongue will we prevail; our tongues are ours; who is lord over us?" They own the power of the tongue but disown responsibility to God. Be guilty of no such presumption. Acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and try to say and do what pleases him.

That your words may be right, keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life. The influence of words and thoughts is reciprocal. Keep the heart and words will follow. Keep the words and you greatly modify the course of thought.

Jesus spake as never man spake because he was unique in his sinlessness. Spurgeon's words were weighty because back of them was a strong earnest soul. If you would be heard be in yourself deserving of a hearing. Be a man or woman first and a speaker or writer second. Be of the same mind with Christ and rest assured God will not let your words for Christ fall to the ground. May it be true of everyone of you in the day of Christ. "By thy words thou shalt be justified."

## SERMON VIII, 1893

### TRUTH IN THE INWARD PARTS

*Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.—Ps. 51: 6.*

**D**ENYING the freedom of the human will Spinoza declares logically enough that “repentance is not a virtue or does not arise from reason; but he who repents of any deed he has done is twice miserable or impotent.” But however consistent with himself, his assertion is contrary to all human experience. Sin finds men out and exacts its penalty within the soul itself. Only a mind drugged with metaphysical opiates or brutalized by vice or hardened into insensibility by familiarity with sin can escape altogether the anguish of remorse. They die “without bands” because they have lost the power to think and feel concerning the realities of the moral universe.

Christianity makes repentance a fundamental virtue. “Except ye repent,” is written on its very forefront as a condition of admission to its blessings. It hears the cry that comes out of the depths of human souls and gives satisfying answer. It does not seek to hush it by showing there is no need nor wisdom in it, but to respond to it with a proffer of forgiveness.

For a long time David’s monstrous sin deadened his moral sense. Only when it was quickened by faithful words of rebuke and by the Spirit’s power did he begin to realize his true situation and call on God for mercy. Then he began to feel that God was round about him—closer than his fawning courtiers. In the brightness of God’s felt presence his sin came out unto clear and bitter

consciousness. He exclaims with great intensity of emotion — "I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."

Frederick the Great once said — "I have just lost a great battle and it was entirely my own fault," concerning which Goldsmith says — "This confession displayed more greatness than all his victories." Never did David display such greatness as when he sacrificed appearances at the shrine of reality, when he acknowledged before God and men profound sense of his own sinfulness. Nothing could be more appropriate, truer to the truth of things, more pleasing to God because in harmony with his will than the passionate utterances of this penitential psalm. Penitence is the first of virtues, because man is first of all a sinner. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Penitence is the return of the sinner to his right mind. The prodigal "comes to himself" and sees things as they are. Above his horizon rise God and eternity, truth and salvation, responsibility and duty and his whole estimate and ideal of life are changed. The unseen henceforth moulds the seen; the spiritual transforms the material. The unseen God, the unseen heaven, the unseen heart are the real things and all else is subsidiary. "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

Let us consider —

I. The meaning of "truth in the inward parts."

II. God's desire for it.

1. It means veracity — truth as opposed to falsehood. God desires truth in the *outward expression*. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." The sycophant, the whisperer, the false witness, the exaggerator, the back-biter are all alike in this, however else they differ, that they speak falsely and are displeasing to God. He who

trifles with truth, trifles at the same time with his Maker and his own character. There is an awfully blighting influence in a single clear-cut falsehood. The penalty God attaches to untruth is untruth and its exaction is immediate. It is only once that the wilful deviation has occurred but that once has lowered the standard of character. It has made falsehood easier and our homage to truth less hearty and constant. It has strained one leading string of this delicate instrument — the human soul, so that its sounds are never so clear and melodious again. Its response to the touch of other souls reveals the injury it has received. Let us be careful how we mar what we can scarcely ever mend. "Truth," says Ruskin, "forgives no insult." God desires truth in the inward parts — in the intellect, the conscience and the affections. He wishes it to be to man — the *law* of his mind, whose operation is never suspended, never relaxed.

Let it hold sway over his *intellect*. How often, alas, even our intellectual processes are vitiated by want of candor. The senses give a false report because we allow prejudices to direct their exercise. We see what we wish to see and by and by become incapable of seeing and our testimony is discredited by those who know us. How often experts called by opposing litigants, flatly contradict each other in regard to facts submitted to the observation of them all! It is no wonder that confidence in such testimony is lessened when their disagreement in so many cases seems to be the result of the expectations of their respective employers. The same is true of the *memory*. If we report past occurrences carelessly, we soon lose the power of accuracy and confidence in ourselves. Even in the higher processes of *thought*, of argument, dishonesty may spoil it all. Says Luther — "Nothing is more pernicious than sophistry. I compare it with a lie, which like a snowball the more it is rolled the greater it becomes. I like not brains that can dispute on both sides and yet conclude nothing clear. But I love

an honest and well-affected mind that seeks after truth simply and plainly and goes not about with phantasies and cheating tricks." To all this let all the people say, Amen! Let each one, especially for himself, guard against shuffling and subterfuge and sophistry and all intellectual deceits. Let every man seek to make his own intellect a faithful and true witness.

Let truth likewise hold sway over the *affections*. Let every manifestation of them be genuine — setting forth truly the love and joy and hope and fear that reign within.

Not Katrine, in her mirror blue  
Gives back the shaggy banks more true  
Than every free-born glance confessed  
The guileless movements of her breast;  
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,  
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,  
Or filial love was glowing there,  
Or meek devotion poured a prayer.

Thus Sir Walter Scott describes the inward guilelessness of his heroine and commends her to our admiration. It is a picture any young woman might well study and seek to copy in her own life. Nothing is more beautiful in man or woman than transparency of character, simplicity, truth in the inward parts. Better far be a simple-minded, guileless Nathanael, than a cunning Mephistopheles or a subtle Sphinx. I wish I could so impress you all with the importance of truthfulness that you would seek to avoid whatever might weaken or destroy it. Allow yourself no breach of truth in either word or act. Cultivate such sensitiveness as will make it the highest offense of another to question your veracity, yea more, such as will cause you profoundest grief when your veracity is suspected by yourself and will lead to the correction of false statements however inadvertently made. You may draw aside the magnetic needle for a



time, but as soon as it is set free from foreign interference it springs back to its true place and points unerringly to the North. With like spontaneity should the soul return from every careless or constrained wandering from the truth. If the machinery of our souls be set to truth and never wilfully swerve from it, we shall be the delight of God and shall dwell in his presence. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in his heart."

2. Truth in the inward parts means *reality* — being rather than seeming. The prophet Jeremiah says of the prophets of his time that they "walk in lies," and our modern Jeremiah, the prophet of Chelsea would say — "We live in an age of shams," and Ruskin holds up one of his "lamps of architecture" to convince us of the same fault of our time. Everything of value has its cheap imitation. Gilding answers instead of gold and manufactured gems vie with the genuine in their sparkling brilliancy and beauty. What is more important, we estimate men and women by the outward appearances. Even we Americans rise up in the presence of titles and rank and forget our lusty proclamation of the dignity of common manhood. We pay homage to the shadow of greatness and are less concerned about the substance. We wish for *ourselves* to appear well. We blush when the collection basket finds us empty handed and with brazen face dismiss the representative of a good cause with our pockets full. We would seem to be generous, brave, courteous, magnanimous, noble and too often the seeming a miserable cheat. Are we not all alike deceiving and being deceived? Let him that is without sin among us cast the first stone at another. Let us listen to Socrates, the heathen teacher, who died for the truth to be uttered. These are his words — "Let the reasonable and true man study, as the one thing needful, *to be the thing he would seem to be.*" Would you seem a

gentleman? be a gentleman. Would you seem a Christian? be a Christian. For seeming is the natural reflection of being. We do not by any means condemn some regard to appearance. Reputation is a thing of value and ought not lightly to be thrown away. But character which lies back of it is of far greater importance and when either must be surrendered for sake of the other let character be maintained. Better let a cloud pass over a fair name than introduce corruption into the very core of one's being. Popular approval is often wrong and always fickle but the approval of one's own heart and of God who is greater than our hearts is an abiding benediction. Pilate on the throne of Judgment was the plaything of a mob, yielding to its clamor, because he cared more for the favorable opinion of the Jews than for justice and truth. Jesus at his feet, charged as a criminal, was calm and serene, unmoved by the outcry of his accusers, his cheek unblanched with fear, his soul aflame with love to the Father. The one seemed to be some great one, the other was. Which of the two will we choose to be our model?

3. Truth in the inward parts means *sincerity* — inner experience rather than outward manifestation. Let us speak here of the religious life. Very many of us profess the Christian faith. Are we in very truth joined to the Lord in faith and love? Do we make glad and fervent acknowledgment of Him as our Redeemer and Lord? Are we really wedded to Him and to all that concerns his honor and the triumph of his Kingdom? We are all here as worshippers in God's house. Is our worship sincere? It needs no rare gifts to discern that they who by irreverent conduct or idle conversation or gaping curiosity or any engagement foreign to the service simply pass the hour in God's house have not worshipped at all. They have even dared to mock God by their unseemly conduct. But it is possible to observe the forms with scrupulousness, while the heart is unengaged. We must

not only give attention to the service, but wait devoutly and sincerely upon Him into whose presence we come. The words of Jesus are suggestive and solemn — “God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

The same heartiness should also characterize our service. Impelling all our efforts there ought to be the enthusiasm of love to Jesus and to souls. Our zeal need not to be tumultuous but ought to be intense. Just here lies a danger connected with popular religious movements. They begin at white heat and cool as they progress. The brazen serpent was God’s instrument of deliverance to the bitten Israelites. But when it became an idol Hezekiah in the spirit of true reform broke it in pieces and called it *Nehushtan* — nothing but a piece of brass. Many a movement of modern days has had a similar history. In the beginning the hand of God was in it but it became only an idol of those who continued it and fit only for destruction. If it will be a continued source of blessing it must live not upon the past but in the present. Its genuineness must be preserved or it will cease to be useful and deserve to die. God struck down Ananias and Sapphira for their pretense of a fuller consecration than they possessed. The community of believers were awestricken but the Church was saved from a deluge of hypocrisy. The movement was kept real and power went with it wherever it advanced. Veracity, reality, sincerity — diverse yet blending rays of the sun of truth. We must have these or our lives will be empty and unfruitful of good. Truth in the inward parts — we must have it or be only as the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal.

II. Consider the fact that God desires it. Nature and the Bible alike make this known.

1. Nature is honest. The signs she gives are uniformly true. All the investigations of science are based upon this principle of the uniformity of nature. The untutored child of the forest can also read her language

and rely upon it. The vine that bears grapes can readily and always be distinguished from the barren climber. Taught in nature's school, we are never so foolish as to seek oranges from the oak, nor grapes upon thorns, nor figs upon thistles. Everything brings forth fruit after its kind and in its season.

The Saviour's miracle upon the barren fig tree simply interprets the ordinary lesson of nature. It unseasonably gave signs of fruit that were delusive and he pronounced his curse upon it, under which it withered and died. Its foliage must not lie and bring reproach upon its kind. You recline beneath the maple or the oak in the confidence that you are safe from any poisonous exhalation. You walk in your garden and the rose lifting its head to the sunlight and the lily of the valley hiding itself beneath abundant leaves greet you with their respective odors, always the same. The strawberries upon your table do not disappoint you with some new and unsatisfying taste. So everywhere the things with which we are familiar are saying to us with one harmonious voice — Be true, Be true.

2. In our own nature, likewise, God has indicated his desire for truth. We are made for it. It is a human characteristic, preserved in large measure from the ruin of the fall. If it were otherwise, social order among men would be impossible. Sir Thomas Browne was once asked — "Do devils lie?" and answered — "No, for then even hell could not subsist." As long as a soul is unsullied from the world, unperverted by lust, it speaks truth and expects the truth to be spoken by others. This natural, spontaneous activity reveals God's desire concerning the soul. The inveterate credulity of our fellows, for which we blame them, is itself testimony to an inborn tendency to adhere to truth ourselves. We approve truth and condemn falsity in others; we are conscious of a certain violence to our natures when we transgress by lying or deception. So it is written in the

very structure of our being and in our social relations that we must be true in the inward parts.

3. Let us, however, turn to *his word*, in which his will is more clearly revealed. Time would fail us to repeat all the precepts and exhortations and commands that directly refer to truth and honesty of heart. Let us recall but a few. "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." "Speak ye everyone truth with his neighbor." "Lie not one to another seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds." "Let love be without dissimulation." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." "Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; but ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." Need I quote more? Do not these sufficiently express God's great desire that his children be right-hearted men and women — rooted and grounded in every virtue and especially in love which is the sun and perfection of all the rest.

God's treatment of those who dishonor truth likewise shows his regard for it. Severest penalties and denunciations are heaped upon the liar and the hypocrite. Gehazi returned to his master's house with his hands full of the rewards of iniquity but when he went out he became a leper as white as now. The *acted* lie of Ananias and Sapphira — for they *said* nothing — brought upon them the stroke of God's judgment and an immortality of infamy. The Pharisees — the hypocrites of the Saviour's day — were singled out by him for the severest rebukes. We can scarcely believe our ears as we hear these words from those lips where grace was wont to flow — "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour



widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity — Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" How intense must have been the Saviour's indignation that impelled him to make this tremendous arraignment. It is God's judgment against hypocrisy in every time that should strike terror unto all our hearts and constrain us to be what we would seem to be.

From this dark picture, though drawn by a master hand, we gladly turn away. Let us look upon another in perfect contrast with it portrayed by the Spirit in the Gospels, Jesus was God's own embodiment of truth — the only perfectly guileless man. Peter, after most intimate fellowship for years, wrote of him — "Who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Whether in the synagogue or in the solitude of the mountain his prayers were but the natural overflow of his earnest, loving soul. He had no worldly policy and cared not to be a King. He rebuked Peter when he sought to dissuade him from his self-sacrificing course. What but love — true, intense, absorbing love — can explain his humble life of toil and self-denial and beneficence. What a striking illustration of his consuming zeal have we in his driving the money-changers from the temple. His character gave momentum to his words and acts or he could not have done it. No hollow eyeservant could have made the impious and avaricious Jews quail with nothing in his hand but a scourge of small cords.

When this man was brought before the high priest and



questioned concerning his disciples and his doctrines, what did he say? Did he shrink from the scrutiny of his past life? Did he fear the disclosure of some hidden shame? Did he defiantly bid them hunt him to his lair? In the most candid, straightforward way he answers—"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." Noble, inspiring words, worthy to guide the life of any young man or woman who wishes to live so as to be able to look the world in the face and not fear.

Young ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1893. What shall I say to you? Desire for yourself, what God desires for you. God desires truth in the inward parts—therefore be true, be true. Let truth be the law of your mind—of your speech—of your conduct—of your life-work. Sir Frederick Leighton, the President of the Royal Academy of Art in London, recently addressed a body of art-students to whom he gave this advice—"I would beg you to keep ever before your eyes the vital truth that sincerity is the well-spring of all lasting achievement and that no good thing ever took root in untruth or in self-deception." Sincerity is the well-spring of achievement in art and in every good enterprise. The soul of art is the soul of the artist. The soul of every good work is the soul of those who project and carry it forward. Put your very soul into whatsoever you undertake and you must succeed.

Let me urge upon you to choose a work worthy of you and then give yourself to it.

First of all, you mean to be a Christian. To the appeal of the Master, "Son, daughter, give thy heart," you have responded—"My Lord and my God. I give myself to thee." Be loyal to this first and best of masters

wherever you go. Whatever prosperity you have in other lines let him share it with you. Your whole life will be ennobled by the consciousness of such a partnership.

Then follow him whithersoever he may lead you. It may be unto the thickest of the conflict, where great principles of right and truth contend for the mastery over the powers of darkness. But fear not. The only success worth having will be yours. Some righteous cause will be nearer its triumph by reason of your life. "In all battles," says Carlyle, "if you await the issue each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account were one and the same." Living thus an earnest life you will please God who desires truth in the inward parts. You will achieve a success that will not disappoint you. When the echoes of men's applause die away you will still have something left. You can cross the threshold of eternity with a pleasing glance backward over a life well spent and a look forward to a land untried, yet full of hope, where the rewards of faithful service beckon to their enjoyment. "Faithful over a few things," says the Master whom we serve, "I will make thee ruler over many things."

## SERMON IX, 1894

### THE CHRISTIAN RACE

*I therefore so run not as uncertainty: so fight I not as one that beateth the air.—I Cor. 9: 26.*

GRAMMAR, music and gymnastics were the chief branches of education among the Greeks. Athletics has perhaps a more robust and a wider meaning in our day than gymnastics. It stands for physical culture in its manlier forms and bids fair, as with the Greeks, to absorb a third of the energies of the schools. Is it necessary that we become wildly athletic in order that we may escape the opposite extreme of becoming ascetic? Is it necessary either to despise the body or to enthrone it? To neglect it is to trifle with health and health is an essential condition of mental or even spiritual vigor. On the other hand, to make it supreme is to ignore the divine arrangement by which it is made subservient to the soul which it embodies. Let it be developed and strengthened — not that it may lord it over man's nobler nature — but that it may furnish it with a worthier service. If out of our running and jumping, our swinging and vaulting, our contests of skill and strength, there come not only stronger bodies but sturdier manhood, purer, truer, steadier, readier men for the real conflicts of life, athletics will pass the final judgment of good men and be marked — approved. But if it runs riot and pays little heed to any code of morals that threatens to interfere with present success, if it develops brutality and boorishness rather than genuine manliness it will pass under just condemnation. There is undoubtedly a great good

here. The only question is whether it shall be swallowed up by a greater evil. I believe that it will not because I have faith that the sober judgment of our young men will ultimately prevail and that in it righteousness will outweigh glory — that what ought to be will seem more important than what can be or must be. Nay, wrong will be the only impossibility and righteousness the only necessity. I look for flowers of virtue as well as of health to grow upon our athletic field.

Paul made use of the Isthmian games, their races and contests — to illustrate the Christian life. With equal aptness we might turn to spiritual account the athletic exercises of the present time.

A race in our age is much the same as when Corinthian racers sped to the goal in Paul's day, or when Herod the Great was an interested witness and patron of the Olympian sports of Jerusalem and Cæsarea. There is the same expectancy at the start, the same intensity at the finish; the same straining of nerve and muscle, the same pride and assurance of friends, the same misery of blunder and defeat, the same joy of victory, the same tumultuous enthusiasm of the crowd that so readily veers to the winning side.

Any contest, physical or intellectual in stadium or forum, is full of interest. It brings every faculty and feeling into play. Competitors and spectators alike run the whole gamut of the soul's emotions — anxious, expectant, despondent; disappointed, surprised, elated, fearing, hoping, exulting. Purposes and thoughts chase each other rapidly through the chambers of the soul. He must be stolid indeed who can participate in, or even watch, such a struggle and be a stranger to its tense and varied experiences.

Paul imagines the Christian encompassed by an intensely interested company of beholders — heroes of a similar contest of faith in the preceding ages, whose names are on the roll of honor for all time and for all eternity,

when he writes to the Hebrews,—“Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness—let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” And when he writes to the Philippians it is evident that the spirit of the racer is in him when he draws that life-like picture in a single sentence—“One thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.”

So in this section he imagines himself again as a combatant—not in any mimic contest for a fading chaplet of laurel, but in the real contest of living with its unestimable prizes of character and immortal life. With a profound sense of the value of the stake, with a clear view of the hindrances to be overcome he spurs himself to the effort—“I, therefore, so run not as uncertainly; so fight I not as one that beateth the air.” In speaking from these words, consider

I. The Christian life is both a race and a battle.

It is no very remote suggestion of these figures that the Christian life is a manly one. There is in it spirit and strength—courage and joy. He knows better than any other the zest of living. His sources of enjoyment are rich and perennial and leave no dregs of bitterness. When he gains his end there are no accusations of a guilty conscience or sullied honor to discount his joy. And when he loses there are unused streams of satisfaction that pour in upon him through divine promises whose glad meaning first reveals itself when the earthly springs begin to fail. If we welcome the champion with cheers and shouts to the field of sport where he contends for the preeminence let us give greetings to the young man or woman who enters to run the way of God's commandments or to fight the good fight of faith. It is the noblest engagement any one of you will ever enter upon and right

nobly should you fulfill it. In this higher sphere of morals and religion be a hero in the strife.

1. The Christian race is *not competitive* but cooperative. It is not true in it that what one wins another loses. The prize is within the reach of all who run well.

In the race of a mere worldly life how keen is the struggle and sometimes how direful the effect! Political economists of a previous generation made competition the very center of their system. It seemed to them the open sesame of social well-being. Hands off! was their cry, while they encouraged the strife of numberless competitors for the prizes society held in its keeping. The sole function of government was to secure fair play while the war was raging. Who does not know something of the remorselessness of the contest, how the weak succumbs to the strong, how the strong falls with a crash like a mighty oak by the stroke of the strongest. And though a kindlier school of economies has risen that places man's well-being in the centre, though it shrinks not back when its ethical demands are contemptuously dismissed as paternalism, though it is doing something to modify social conditions, to care for the weak as well as give opportunity to the strong, the competitive character of life is yet manifest. "One receiveth the prize"—the few are achieving success and many fail. There must be pain for a noble soul when his achievement means another's downfall. On the other hand, there is added pleasure when his success helps his fellow to victory. How delightful the fact that Christian life is thus cooperative. Let me lay aside every weight and run the Christian race for thereby I help instead of hinder my companions. As the prancing steeds shorten the way for each other and speed away under the spur of each other's pace, so let me be a spur to my yokefellow and receive a similar incitement in return. Let there be a conscious effort to be mutually helpful. Let them that fear the Lord speak often one to another—let them consider one



another to provoke unto love and good works. But whether there be conscious purpose or not there will be quickening to others from every worthy life. He who adds to his own faith, virtue, temperance or godliness, not only does not subtract from the graces of others but makes it easier for them to add to them. He who strives after perfection contributes to the perfection of his brethren. With hand in hand and heart to heart we may all press on toward the goal with the inspiring thought that the spiritual progress of one will further the progress of every other. Nay more, our own progress will be retarded if we do not help those by our side. It is laid upon us as an obligation that we love one another — that no man seek his own but each his neighbor's good — that we bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.

2. The Christian race may be — ought to be accelerative from the beginning to the end. In it no slackness of speed will husband strength for a critical moment. No spurt at the close can make up for the loss of the laggard along the way. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more into the perfect day" (Job 17:9).

Christian life is no mere dash — a paroxysm quickly over, but a sustained effort to achieve something worthy. "Patient continuance in well-doing," is a good statement of it. Not a single virtue is all at once what it may be.

Do you lament the weakness of your faith? It may be stronger. Keep on believing and praying, using the faith you have and seeking for the spirit's bracing energy to increase its power. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Do you grieve that so often you do not have yourself well in hand, that passion runs riot and reason is powerless, that feelings banish faith and wisdom and hope. Is there a little member that sets the world on fire all around you, that offends with words that are as darts and arrows? Though you often trip and fall,

be not discouraged. Arise and renew your efforts. Persevere in the race for self-mastery and with help of grace you will reach the goal of victory.

Or is there a deeper evil still that distresses you? Is there found bubbling up from the heart the dregs of malice or pride, of insincerity or impurity? Does it seem to you that such a bitter fountain will never be made to send forth sweet waters? Yield not to cowardly thoughts like these. Listen to the voice of God — "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; whatever virtue you lack, whatever grace you desire, do not begrudge it time and room for its full development. It may indeed spring into sudden strength and beauty but more probably it will need to be rocked by the winds of temptation and nourished by the rich soil of truth and moistened with dews of heavenly grace. Time and prayer, purpose and endeavor must contribute to its growth. Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if you fail not — reap results of Christian character here and heavenly reward hereafter. Says our Master — "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

3. The Christian life is not only a race but a battle. The chief additional suggestion of this metaphor is the resistance to the Christian life. If the race is not competitive as among themselves, there are common enemies that resist their onward march. While brethren stand shoulder to shoulder as they advance, these enemies that confront them must be overcome.

The scene of conflict may be *the world*. On its broad field the forces of good and evil meet in terrible struggle. Sometimes right is on the scaffold; sometimes wrong is on the throne. Sometimes the cause of God seems crushed and broken. And when it makes headway it is often through storm of shot and shell that the vantage ground

is reached. Yet in spite of disaster and defeat and fierce opposition, in the long ages the cause of truth and right is triumphant. The "eternal years of God," belong to it.

Speak History — who are life's victors?

Unroll thy long annals and say

Are they those whom the world called victors, who won  
the success of a day?

The martyrs or Nero? The Spartans who fell at  
Thermopylæ's tryst,

Or the Persians and Xerxes? His Judges or Socrates?  
Pilate or Christ?

The scene of conflict may be a *narrow field*. It may rage within a single human soul and this is clearly the meaning here. Paul tells here of his own inner life and characterizes it as a tremendous battle. They who regard the Christian life as a holiday affair did not learn about it from Paul. In its complete outworking he considered it a Herculean task to which he spurred himself by every motive of love and ambition, of hope and fear, Are you a Christian? You answer, yes. But what do you mean by your answer? Do you mean only that you have subscribed your name unto the Lord? That is worth doing and ought not to be undervalued. Do you mean that you sit regularly in your comfortable pew on the Sabbath? This too is well. But true religion means more than this. Do you not know that it means compliance, not with the world but with the will of Christ — a hand to hand struggle with the evil about you wherever you are — resistance to the devil and your own evil heart? It means that you "Quit your meanness"—meanness to your fellow men and meanness to your Maker. When one was asked—"Who is the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son?" he slowly replied—"myself"—and then told of some envious feel-

ings he was obliged to suppress on hearing of another's spiritual prosperity. It was a tender conscience that appeared in his reply rather than unusual wickedness. He who has never yet been ashamed in his own presence and God's, though no ear of man has heard, nor eye of man has seen has scarcely commenced the Christian warfare.

The Christian life is simple in its beginning but it is unceasing in its demands. "Patient continuance in well-doing," is no easy thing. The world is lying in wait to take us captive, the evil one threateningly crosses our path and a treacherous heart needs continual watching. He who would be loyal to God in the world and be crowned victor at the last, must work out his salvation with fear and trembling — must fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. What a bugle-blast is that of Paul, urging us to heroic effort — "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

"Wherefore take up the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand."

II. Some conditions of success in the race and battle of Christian life. They are much the same as in similar contest in the natural sphere.

1. He who would be successful must be a man of *intelligent purpose* — who knows what he means to do and means to do what he knows. He must have some fixed principles for his guidance. He runs "not as uncertainly."

There are many things we do not know. Like Abraham we go forth not knowing whither. There is a providence that "shapes our ends, rough-hew them how

we will." We are every one of us voyaging under sealed orders and know not at what ports we will touch. Newman's beautiful hymn makes the trusting soul say amid the "encircling gloom"—"Lead thou me on. Keep thou my feet: I do not ask to see the distant scene,—one step enough for me."

I may not know where I am to labor, nor what God wills concerning me. I may find truest happiness in waiting upon God day by day for orders.

But concerning some things God's will has been already revealed. Concerning some things we must know if we would be strong. First of all there must be no uncertainty concerning our relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Is He the Saviour of the world? Is He higher than the highest of God's creatures?—the Son of God, himself God? Did he rise again from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures? Is his religion the light and life of our souls and do we hang all our hopes for eternity upon it? If there be any lurking doubt in our minds concerning these points, there is a worm at the root of our piety that will either kill it or give it a sickly life and hue.

Half-heartedness is due in many instances to unconscious lack of conviction. But when the things of Christ are as real to us as the things of daily life, when we can say with Paul—"I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," then we can serve Christ with buoyancy of spirit and bounding feet.

The Church is shorn of its strength; its very life is eaten out when liberalism and levelism in religion blur the faith of its members. When its clear, sharply defined outline fades out of sight, what have men to contend for?

They may be borne along by the Church's remaining life or their own habit, but they can have no genuine interest in its services and work. Away with a flabby,



sentimental theology that apologizes for its own existence and praises what it feebly opposes, that places Christ not as the one bright and regnant star in the whole heavens, but as one among many, including him in a brilliant constellation along with Buddha and Confucius and Plato and thus robbing him of his unique glory as God's own Son and the World's Redeemer. He who teaches thus may be called a seer or an advanced thinker or an erudite student of comparative religion but his Christianity is too diluted to be of much use to him or to those who sit at his feet.

Let him who enters the Christian race understand what he is doing. Let the essential facts and distinctive doctrines of Christianity be accepted or else let its name be abandoned.

Further, there ought to be no uncertainty concerning the fundamental principles of good morals. Here also let us so run not as uncertainly.

There is indeed scarcely any difference of opinion among men in regard to truth and justice, honesty and purity. These are intuitions of the soul and no bias of interest can altogether prevent their recognition. There may however be clearness of view without purpose — sentiment without principle. Uncertainty may arise in the will as well as in the thoughts. Will he stand to his thoughts? — is the question. Says Robertson — "If we look at it deeply, it is will that makes the difference between man and man — not knowledge, not opinions, not devoutness, not feeling, but will — the power to be." Men can grow eloquent in defense of a virtue and then sacrifice it for a consideration. Yea, they are honestly grieved when it is slain in the streets, and yet slay it themselves under stress of a situation. Several of our greatest men of a past generation, giants in intellect like Webster and Chase, who hated slavery with sincere hatred, receded from their high positions that they might conciliate the slave power and its friends and reach the chief magistracy



of the nation. So are men today bowing to the behests of the liquor power, though in heart they despise it, lest they lose some worldly ambition in politics or trade. So are we all in danger of loosing our hold on righteousness from considerations that are selfish. There is need of settled purpose concerning these things or we will often be overborne by temptation. Settle it in your very soul — I must be always honest — I must be true — I must be pure. What a model young man was Joseph! Temptation fell back from him like the stormy waves at the feet of Gibraltar. God was with him as the rock of his strength. He would not — could not — abuse the confidence of his earthly master nor disobey the law of his God. "How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?"

There was no uncertainty about Ruth when she took her place by the side of Naomi and of God. There was none about Daniel when, contrary to the King's interdict, with windows open he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks unto God." There was no uncertainty about Esther when forgetful of her own ease and safety, she replied to Mordecai — "I will go in unto the King and if I perish I perish." There was none about Nehemiah when to his wily enemies who sought to bring him down to their level, he said — "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down."

My young friends, follow the example of men and women such as these. Be upright, reliable, heroic men and women and you will be trusted by those who know you best and successfully run the race that is set before you.

2. A second condition of success in the Christian life is *skill*. There is an art of Christian living. "Add to your faith, virtue and to virtue, knowledge," — knowledge that is due to experience, that discriminates between good and evil in the entangled circumstances of life with the promptness that results from practice.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given  
The instinct that can tell  
That God is in the field when He  
Is most invisible.

Blest too is he who can divine  
Where real right doth lie  
And dares to take the side that seems  
Wrong to man's blinded eye.

However excellent one's purpose, there is need of training in right ways. "So fight I not as one that beateth the air," says Paul — not with aimless, ineffectual strokes but with the skill of a trained boxer.

There is a kind of training that is general. Its aim is to build up spiritual strength and health. The Church with all its appliances and opportunities for religious instruction and activity is a sort of spiritual gymnasium. In it we become familiar with the Christian weapons and warfare. We learn how to believe and to love, how to pray and to labor, how to be silent and to speak, how to endure and to dare. We learn above all the value of the sword of the Spirit, which like the flaming sword that kept the way of the tree of life turns every way to guard the soul of the believer. He who neglects this general discipline is not likely to be ready for the sustained strain of the battle of life.

Special training is however equally valuable. It is in the practice of specific virtues that skill and certainty are gained in their exercise. There is a habit of conscientious living that makes it comparatively easy to do right. Habits there will be and youth is the seed-time of habits, either good or bad. The only question is — What will your habit be? What grooves are you cutting into your imagination? What grip of will are you getting on your appetites and passions? What is the quality of the emotions you are cherishing unto dominance?

You have, may be, an ideal of life that sometime you wish to realize. But whatever your ideal, it is your present action that is determining the future.

Sow truth if thou the truth wouldst reap  
Who sow the false shall reap the vain;  
Erect and sound thy conscience keep  
From hollow words and deeds refrain.

Sow love and taste its fruitage pure,  
Sow peace and reap its harvests bright,  
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,  
And find a harvest-home of light.

There was no beating of the air when Jesus as the champion of redeemed humanity resisted Satan's attack. He knew how to handle the sword of the Spirit and with repeated strokes — It is written! — It is written! — It is written! sent him reeling to the pit whence he came. The final verdict of history — even his rejecters agreeing thereto — accords with that of Pilate — "I find no fault in this man." He is the one faultless man of all the ages — the perfect example of holy living. Follow him and you will become skilled in battle and gain the victory of those who overcome by faith and by the word of God.

3. A third essential to success is *enthusiasm*. There must be some warmth of interest if we would succeed in any engagement. You can hardly read these words of Paul without feeling the fire that burned within his breast. It kindles your spirit as you touch his and you are ready to say — "I must gird myself for a worthier life."

The source and substance of a genuine enthusiasm is *love*. If we fall in love with God's laws it will be easy to obey them. "O how I love thy law," sings the Psalmist, "It is my meditation all the day." There were both patriotism and Christian zeal — love of country and

love of Christ and his cause in the exclamation of Knox — "Give me Scotland or I die!" It was love that sent Carey a century ago to hard service in the indigo factories of India. Why did Livingston and Hannington and Mackay leave the comforts and refinements of their native land and brave the dangers of a death-laden climate and of wild beasts and savage men? Love did it — love for the souls of men.

Why did Juliet Henshaw the trained nurse volunteer to go to Swinburne Island in the cholera panic two years ago? In spite of plain forewarning of the risk, without bravado, without fear, moved by the thought that someone must go and that her training made it possible for her to be serviceable she went to care for the sick and dying. Week after week she continued with three hours' rest out of twenty-four, with strength lessening to do the humble, disagreeable work that was required. "She inspired the doctors with admiration, the sick people with hope and the other nurses with resolution." She was a constant enthusiastic servant of humanity because she had a heart full of love for humanity.

There was one in your own midst, whose devotion to a deformed sister was as heroic and admirable as that of any I have mentioned. Through long years, with perfect good cheer, with no complaint on the lips, with no burden on the heart, she gave the needed service till her own strength failed in martyrdom to the welfare of another and she went home to a well-earned rest. It was love did it.

Love to Christ alone can constrain us to run well the Christian race. Let us rally around the Captain of our salvation with a more inspiring enthusiasm. Let us support his cause with loyal affection. Let Hope add brightness to the enthusiasm love kindles. When some one said to Leonidas — "The enemy is near us," he rejoined without dismay, as if eager for the fray — "And we are near

the enemy." 'Tis as if he said — We are Spartans — 'Tis the enemy should be in dread.

Would that the name of Christian might wield such magic power over all of us who bear it that with more than Spartan heroism we might resist the devil and all our spiritual foes. And when at last we stand entrenched on the heights of assured victory may it be ours to say as we look back — "O my soul thou hast trodden down strength."

Members of the class of 1894, you all acknowledge the divine origin of the religion of Jesus. Nearly all of you have identified yourselves with his cause. You have entered for the Christian race, you have enlisted as soldiers of the cross. Do you mean to make a success of it? Do you find within you the conditions of a successful Christian life?

Have you formed a thoughtful purpose to follow Christ? Are you now living in habitual obedience to his will? Have you an abiding glowing interest in all that contributes to your own right living and the glory of your Master? Can you say — will you not say with all earnestness, henceforth — "I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I not as one that beateth the air."

Yourselves being judges, this is the chief thing. You may be in doubt about your profession or occupation and have good reason for your questioning. But you can have none for indecision here. I care not what line you pursue, if you take a warm Christian heart along with you, you will be a blessing to the world. My sincerest wish for every one of you has been and is that you may so learn Christ here that he will be a power in your lives in all the future. Let your signature to Christ's cause have your own heart's blood in it, your consecrated will. Sign! but sign with firm faith, with resolution, with affection and though the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, you will reach the goal at last, con-

querors and more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Everyone of you, perhaps, is building a castle in your mind concerning this present life. I would not check your fondest hopes of earthly happiness, your aspirations after greatness, goodness, or wealth. But there is a beyond and there is a motive from it to the best life that ought to be pressed upon you — that you should press upon yourselves. It seems to come from far and therefore loses something of its power. And yet it may be near and that possibility ought to be considered. I look back over ten years here and can put my finger on one here and there of the graduates of this period that has gone already and sometimes that one has been among the strongest of the class. That one singled out by divine providence may be you. Can you afford to ignore such a possibility?

An Arab in a circle of jewellers of Basrah related this story — “Once I missed my way in the desert and having no provision left I gave myself up for lost — when I happened to find a bag of pearls. I shall never forget the relish and delight that I felt on supposing it to be fried wheat, nor the bitterness and despair which I suffered on discovering that the bag contained pearls.” There are pearls of earthly good that may measurably satisfy you now. But the time will come when there will be an unspeakable hunger for the heavenly good. If you have none laid up in store, nor within each reach of the practised hand of faith, you will be given over to the bitterness of despair. May you have bread in your basket for your journey through the desert land and on the other side come out into a land of plenty! May the Lord prepare you for your future, whatever that future be, guide you by his counsel while you live and bring you to his glory without one missing!



## SERMON X, 1895

### ALONE, YET NOT ALONE

*Ye shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.—John 16: 32.*

THE days of the public ministry of Jesus are ended. His last discourse to the thirsty multitudes in the temple enclosure has been preached. The last effort of love to save the wicked city from its impending doom has been made — made, alas! in vain. Tomorrow he will be crucified. One of his own disciples has already left the company of the rest to fulfil his wretched bargain to betray his Master into the hands of his enemies. In a few hours under the traitor's guidance a multitude will pursue him to his accustomed retreat in Gethsemane and the succession of iniquitous events will commence that will culminate in the tragedy of the cross.

How will Jesus spend the few hours that remain? Read the chapters that make up the wonderful discourse from which our text is taken and you will get an answer. He is with the company that journeyed with him and shared his public life. In the upper room where the pass-over was observed and the supper instituted, he invites them to a full and free interchange of thought and feeling. He calls them friends and assures them that he withholds nothing from them. He comforts them concerning his departure — telling them whither he goes and why. "I go to prepare a place for you. If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you . . . I came out from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father." He reveals to them

the secret of fruitful holy living — intimate union and communion with himself. He forewarns them of the hour of sorrow and gives them some foregleams of the chastened, yet satisfying joys that his presence with them will impart.

Under the influence of his gracious impressive words the faith of the disciples is quickened into enthusiasm and they exclaim — “Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

But Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves and disclosed to them a sequel that in this happy hour they would never have suspected. He seems to arrest their fervent confession and summon them to solemn thought — “Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”

Let us meditate upon the situation of Jesus here declared — alone yet not alone — and upon a possible counterpart of it in our own lives. Let us not so separate him from ourselves that we learn no lessons from his recorded experience.

There was indeed a cup of which he drank whose bitterness we may never taste. There were experiences that wrung his soul as the great sin-bearer, that shield us from the like sense of the divine wrath. He trod the wine-press of the wrath of God alone and of the people there was none with him. The solitariness of his sufferings as the atoning Redeemer was absolute and unique — separated from all others in kind as well as in degree — without a precedent and without a copy.

But I like to think of Jesus here as the perfect human friend conferring with his fellows. For years together he has enjoyed their companionship, partaking of their toils and travels and privations. He prized their human sympathy and is grieved by the anticipation of its loss.

Those words spoken in Gethsemane were no mere passing rebuke of the disciples, but an expression of the deepest feeling of the Master on account of their separation from himself — “What! could you not watch with me one hour?” It is the beginning of that hour of which the words of our text gave a timely preview. He has passed beyond them — passed within a veil through which their eyes cannot pierce. They do not — cannot — follow and therefore abandon him to the solitude of experiences they cannot share. It was a lonely hour with Jesus when Peter, James and John — the beloved trio — and especially when John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” could not enter into his experiences, could not keep him within their wakeful consciousness for so brief a time, could not watch with him one hour.

These were the bitter experiences of a man — of a man bereft of friendly offices and in His record here given we may find an example and illustration of a human life — with its changing conditions and its abiding compensations — its human faithlessness and its divine unfailing fellowship.

Let us consider

I. The loneliness of a soul.

II. The companionship that relieves it.

To be alone and to be lonely may not be exactly the same. The former states a fact; the latter, an experience. Yet the fact and the experience are so closely related that the same word includes both meanings. The feeling of loneliness arises ordinarily from the fact of being alone, and so loneliness, while having originally an objective significance, has come to have a subjective one that almost supplants the original.

There is a loneliness of *simple solitude* — the absence of friend or fellow. It may be a brief retirement to some secluded nook, which is often very delightful. Or it may be the prolonged, unsought solitude of the interminable forest or the sea-girt isle or the “wide, wide sea” itself.

It has lasted long and the end is not. Hope, that springs eternal in the human breast, grows faint through many sickening disappointments. Imagination plays upon the past and sights and sounds are seen and heard within the chambers of the soul that never fell upon the eye or trembled on the outer air.

Tennyson pictures Enoch Arden sitting —

In the seaward-gazing gorge  
A shipwrecked sailor, waiting for a sail;  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices.

He thinks of wife and child and horse and boat and all the associated memories of home.

Once likewise in the ringing of his ears,  
Though faintly, merrily — far and far away —  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
Then, though he knew not wherefore, started up  
Shuddering, and when the beauteous, hateful isle  
Returned upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being everywhere  
Lets none, who speaks with him, seem all alone  
Surely the man had died of solitude.

There is something awful about being all alone and the soul would sink within itself and die were it not for the fact that the Infinite is a spirit kindred to our own from whose immanent presence we are never far away.

There is a loneliness of *decision*. Every spirit is individual and dwells apart from every other. We say, "I" and "thou" and "he" and thus recognize the separateness — the personality of each. But emphasis is given to individuality when choices are made. Even though our choice coincides with that of others, it is not

less our own. Yet the conspicuousness of decision is heightened when it cuts one off from fellowship — when he becomes the one man in his generation or community to advocate a neglected cause or defend a despised truth, or when his brave and righteous act singles him out as a hero or marks him off for a victim.

There are crises in all lives when such decisions must be made. It is an hour of solicitation to evil. The net is spread on every side. Only a courageous heart can break through its meshes and walk at liberty. Such a crisis came to Joseph in Potiphar's house and the heroic answer he gave has been like a shield to many ever since — "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Such a crisis came to Daniel more than once. It came as it comes to us in connection with very ordinary matters of eating and drinking and praying. Shall he offend God or Darius? Shall he make his petition to his God contrary to the king's decree or make his petition to the king alone contrary to the divine decree? Will he choose Jehovah and the den of lions or Darius and the second place in the kingdom? Daniel's enemies made no miscalculation. They gave him credit for unflinching loyalty to the law of his God and his actions justified their confidence. When the hour of noon was come, Daniel flung open the windows of his chamber toward Jerusalem and prayed as aforetime. His decision was unhesitating, though it separated him from every man in power in the Persian dominion.

Not less picturesque is that familiar scene in the life of Luther when at the diet of Worms he stood before princes and ecclesiastics and said — "Here I stand; I can do no other."

Such scenes as these come unheralded as life is flowing on in its usual course. They come as the ledge of rock comes to the onrushing stream and the leap is made according to the momentum of character behind it.

Anywhere in any life there may be the occasion, suddenly or slowly matured, of heroic action — of decision for or against truth or right or God. Anywhere there may be necessity to stand alone if we would maintain a conscience void of offence or further the causes we love.

There is the loneliness *of desertion*. 'Tis lonely to never see a "kindly human face, nor ever hear a kindly voice." Lonelier still is it when one by his own act steps out from the mass of men and separates himself from the very atmosphere in which they live and breathe.

But loneliest of all is it when one is forsaken of old companions and friends — when those who shared his life and joys and hopes, who sympathized with his purposes and plans, prove false and faithless and abandon him to his fate — to failure or to doom.

'Midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,  
To hear, to see, to feel and to possess,  
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,  
With none to bless us, none whom we can bless;  
None that with kindred consciousness endued,  
If we were not, would seem to smile the less,  
Of all that flattered, followed, sought and sued;  
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude."

The pang of desertion was keenly felt by our Saviour. Not one of all that loving band that circled about him for three years was to him

True as the needle to the pole,  
Or as the dial to the sun.

When the hour of his suffering and ignominy came, they every one shrank back in selfish terror.

"Ye shall be scattered every one *to his own*," is the Saviour's explanatory hint concerning the departure of his disciples. Each was scattered to his own — his own busi-



ness — his own family — his own interests. It is the too familiar story of love to Christ supplanted by love to self — of friendship vitiated by selfishness.

There are indeed links of friendship that are often stronger than those of kindred. Yet even these are sometimes corroded by ambition and covetousness or snapped asunder by the strain of worldly threats or promises. Slowly and bitterly we yield to the conviction that the friend we trusted has failed us in the hour of need — that there is a limit to his constancy that has already been reached.

More bitter far than all,  
It was to know that Love could change and die!  
Hush! for the ages call,  
The Love of God lives through Eternity  
And conquers all.

We can only, like Jesus, fall back upon the Gibraltar of our confidence — upon the bosom of the Almighty Father whose faithfulness and love endure forever. "Ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me."

Let us now in the second place consider

II. The Divine Companionship that brings relief in every lonely hour. "The Father is with me," was the Saviour's comfort when the disciples were scattered from him. There never was a moment in all his earthly course when he could not say — The Father is with me. Perhaps we cannot unravel all the mystery connected with the relation of the Divine-human Mediator to the Divine Father. How can he be a Sin-bearer, enduring the smittings of divine wrath, and at the same time an object of the divine approval? How can he suffer under the frown of God as an angry Judge and yet enjoy the favor of God as a loving Father? The seeming paradox may perplex us for a little, yet will pass away as we reflect upon

it. God may impose a burden and yet approve the conduct of the burden-bearer. He may even exact a penalty and yet sanction the assumption of it by the sinner's representative. He may deal with him in righteousness as occupying the *sinner's* place or he may deal with him as a *servant* fulfilling his appointed, accepted task in the sinner's behalf. So that we may say that the Saviour was never more pleasing to God than when he drank to its bitter dregs the cup of divine justice pressed to his lips. In the "Believer's Riddle," Ralph Erskine thus presents the mysterious truth in rugged verse —

In him concentrated at his death  
His Father's love, his Father's wrath,  
Even He whom passion never seized  
Was then most angry, when most pleased.

Not only did he possess the Father's favor, but he lived in the *joyous consciousness* of it. The Father's name was continually upon his lips, because it was ever in his mind. Forty-one times he speaks of him in these discourses contained in the three chapters beginning with the 14th of John. Six times he breathes his name in that intercessory prayer in the 17th Chapter and every line in it tells equally of reverence and familiarity. "Father, the hour is come . . ." "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me,"—"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee and these have known that thou didst send me."

As he hanged upon the cross not many hours afterward, we hear him praying for his crucifiers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when the days of his humiliation were over and at the dawn of the day he appeared to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, the first words he uttered tell of his home-going to God—"I ascend to my Father and your Father—

to my God and your God." The very air is to him peopled with the Father's presence and every object or event is seen in the light of the relation he sustains to it. This exalted companionship with the Father compensates for every loss, heightens every joy, suffuses every experience with sweetness and peace. In all the vexing details of his successive trials before ecclesiastical and civil tribunals he maintained a demeanor of entire calmness. Amid a perfect storm of human passion, he showed a composure absolutely undisturbed, a freedom from excitement that marks superiority to all that were about him.

How can we account for this intimacy and this resulting assurance and peace? They could walk together because they were agreed. He was at one with the Father because he sought not his own will but the will of Him that sent him. His own explanation of the foundation of his confidence is given in these words—"He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." There was never a flaw in his perfect obedience—not an act or thought or feeling or wish that was out of harmony with the Divine mind. Therefore there was never a break in their fellowship and the language of the Fatherly heart concerning him is exuberant and joyous—"Behold my servant whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth."

Is the same source of relief in lonely hours open to any human soul? Is the name of the Lord a strong tower into which any one of us may run and be safe? Yes—whosoever will may become a child of God by believing in his Son and may keep company with his heavenly Father in the way of faith and obedience. Abraham was called the "friend of God," and this distinction belongs to all who like him believe unto righteousness. But as the pleasures of any friendship may be marred by suspicion or unfriendly action, so the joy of the divine friendship may be interrupted by sin. We can only hope to

enjoy in full freedom the sweetness of the Father's fellowship by doing always as Jesus did those things that are pleasing in his sight. We must separate from every company that is inconsistent with God's if we would retain the satisfying consciousness of his favor and presence. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Oh, what a privilege is this! What love amazing that we should be called the sons of God! What solace we often find in resting our weary, lonely heads upon the bosom of God. Many a time some of you have felt that there is no comfort anywhere but in him and have fled from man to hold converse with God. No other could understand so perfectly; no other could help so tenderly and mightily. I think of Jacob, fleeing from the frown of his deceived father and the anger of his supplanted brother, on that long journey to Padan-Aram, lying in the open field with the sky for his covering and a stone for his pillow, with not one friend or fellow by his side, leagues away from any man or woman that loves him or can speak to him. What a glad surprise it must have been to him to hear a voice breaking the awful silence—"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed. . . . Behold I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

I think of Henry Martyn, who, when a young man, was spoken of as a "student who never lost an hour," who gave his life to Christ and Foreign Mission work in India. After doing a great work in translating the Scriptures and setting an example of devotion that has borne fruit ever since, health failed and rest was abso-

lutely necessary. He set out on what he described as "my long journey of 1300 miles," to Constantinople on his way home to England. It was a wearisome, dangerous, hurried flight from post to post until his exhausted frame could endure no more and the heavenly home was reached before the earthly came in sight. The last record he made was of an hour of unexpected repose — "I sat and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God — in solitude, my Company, my Friend and Comforter. Oh, when shall time give place to eternity?"

I think again of Livingston as Stanley found him in the heart of Africa, hating slavery and loving God and men. He, too, took ill on the homeward journey and one morning, as his attendants looked in upon him, they saw that he was gone. His spirit had taken its flight when none was with him — suddenly caught up to glory by the Father's hand. They found him, not in bed, but kneeling at the bedside with his head buried in his hands — alone, yet not alone, for he was with God and God was with him.

The companionship of God is not only valuable for comfort, but for *support*. There is no brace to right decision like the consciousness of his righteous presence. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. The three Hebrew heroes refused to worship the golden image Nebuchadnezzar set up because they could affirm with confidence — "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery furnace."

Carey's heart was impressed with the awful need of the heathen and offered to go as a missionary to India. Many doubted the wisdom and practicability of the proposed enterprise and even reproached him for wild fanaticism. But with unshaken faith and courage and hope, he proclaimed his convictions. The key-note of his answer to every objector was — "Undertake great things for God; expect great things from God."



Ye who have a share in unpopular movements, be not disheartened when you find that there are laggards and stragglers and gloomy prophets. Whoever deserts a righteous cause, God never disowns it. He may not at once appear to hasten its triumph, but his heart is with it and with every man or woman who espouses it, and sooner or later his presence and power will give it success. At the first, Methodist was a term of reproach and even so good a man as our own John Brown of Haddington blessed God for having "kept him from following that man of sin, John Wesley." Yet who now would question the appropriateness of Adam Clarke's epitaph written with diamond on a pane of glass in his study window in Manchester—"Good men need not marble; I dare trust glass with the memory of John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; who with indefatigable zeal and perseverance, travelled these kingdoms, preaching Jesus for more than half a century by his unparalleled writings and labors. He revived and spread Scriptural Christianity wherever he went, *for God was with him.*" Yes, God was with him and is with every faithful servant and will at last bring forth his righteousness as the light and his judgment as the noonday. God is with every worthy cause and will sooner or later make it to ride upon the high places of the field.

Some day Love shall claim his own,  
Some day Right ascend the throne  
Some day Hidden Truth be known,  
Some day — some sweet day.

We hear much in our day of the necessity for a *practical* religion — a religion that will straighten out the tangles of the present world rather than offer a way of happy escape to a better world. As it is expressed in a recent work on Social Evolution—"Christianity is intended to save *not only men but man* and its mission



should be to teach us not only how to die as individuals, but how to live as members of society."

But what is the preaching that affects living? Not moral essays without reference to a moral Governor — not sensational thrusts at manifest evils that curse society — not denunciation of doctrine and dogma with a fling at our fathers — but old-fashioned Bible truth, brought home with blood-red earnestness to the hearts and consciences of men. The world needs motive as well as vision and there are no motives like those that come from Sinai and the cross — from the awful majesty and the amazing love of God. The religion that takes hold on the other world is the most practical for this. Eliminate from it every invisible element — God and heaven and hell — providence, eternity and responsibility — and what have you left worth speaking of to constrain men to live for the elevation of themselves or their fellow-men? Let a man live with God and for God and he will have the best preparation for living with man and for man.

Religion's all. Descending from the skies  
To wretched man, the goddess in her left  
Holds out this world, and in her right, the next.

Members of the graduating class of 1895, aspire after the filial fellowship with God which characterized your Saviour. I know not what trials may be in the path of any one of you, what desert places you will pass through, what sharp crisis will come to you when decision will tremble in the balance, what disappointments you may have in friends and associates in labor. But I do know that this way has been trodden by Christ and that his passage over it has made it easier for you and me.

I know no better provision for your happiness and safety than to take God with you. Do not be afraid of being thought religious. Let the world know that you

stand with God-fearing men and women. Speak daily to God in prayer. Listen to Him as He speaks to you in His Word. Cultivate in all appropriate ways a sense of the Divine presence.

Be a thorough-going Christian. Be a living branch of the life-giving vine. He that hath the Son hath life — life that is life indeed.

A month ago or more some of the trees were just putting forth their green and tender leaves and giving promise of a rich and abundant foliage. But one chill and desolating night destroyed their beauty and black and withered and dead they seemed for weeks.

Will they revive? Or will they stand abashed through all the live-long season? They have life and life contains the potency and promise of victory. Already new branches displace or overshadow the old and life exults in her triumph over desolation and death.

May such life — vigorous, dominating spiritual life belong to every one of you! Then come what will, you will survive the hindrances and dangers of your post. You will be able to stand the chill and shock of every adverse circumstance. You will overcome by the renewing, transforming, irrepressible power of life in Christ Jesus. "I am come," says Jesus, "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

When God scattered the children of Israel among the heathen, he gave this assurance to the remnant that believed in his name — "I will be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." I trust this promise will be fulfilled to every one of you, wherever you may be scattered in our own or other lands. May the Lord be to you a sanctuary — a sacred and sure refuge. I wish I could convince you that this is not mere rhetoric. I speak of the basis of the best life — of real life — of your life and mine if we will. It is possible for you so to live that like Jesus you can say everywhere and always — "The Father is with me."

God likewise told the Children of Israel of a time when he would gather them again to their own land and put his Spirit within them and write his own name upon them and claim them as his own. Such a gathering time will come by and by for all the sons of God on the plains of the promised land on high. We'll all meet again, will we not? Yes, we'll meet again by the grace of God in that far off land. We can already hear the welcome of him who has gone before. Centuries ago, he said — "I go to my Father," and the words he spake before he went yet linger in the ear of humanity — "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

It will be no more the experience of faith — "The Father is with me," but the experience of open vision — I am with the Father and see him face to face — home after many wanderings — home to stay. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

## SERMON XI, 1896

### THE GIRDLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

*Faithfulness shall be the girdle of his reins.—Isa. 11: 6.*

MR. BRICE in just and friendly criticism of our "American Commonwealth," mentions among our salient features—"a fondness for bold and striking effects—an enthusiasm for anything that can be called genius with an over-readiness to discover it." A distinguished American lecturer does not hesitate to speak on a Boston platform and within hearing of all the English-speaking world of "American reverence for successful sharpness."

Are these estimates as just as they are frank? Do we run wild after brilliancy in achievement? Do we admire most what may be proclaimed upon the house-top, or in more modern phrase may be spread abroad by posters and headlines? Do we care less for something to say than how to say it—for elocution than for education—for the clapping of the hands of the multitude than for the consciousness of honest attainment? Do we prize most the shining, conspicuous qualities of men and women rather than their quiet sterling worth?

If these things be so, we are not true to the beginnings of our nation's history, to the examples of our forefathers. They were men who lived under the inspiration of duty rather than of glory, who cared as much for the cornerstone as for the capstone, who built year after year for truth and right and God all unconscious of the greatness of their endeavor. Washington, in his modesty and reserve and fidelity to duty was a fit exponent of the men of his time and his words in the darkest hour of the

revolution contain his own idea of his mission—"I see my duty—that of standing up for the liberties of my country; and whatever difficulties and discouragements lie in my way I dare not shrink from it; and I rely on that Being who has not left to us the choice of duties, that whilst I shall conscientiously discharge mine I shall not finally lose my reward." Pomp and pageantry were foreign to his mind; duty, God and heaven were the invisible environment that made its impress on his thoughts and purposes.

I wish to commend to you the very commonplace virtue of fidelity. Like charity, she "seeketh not her own." She hides herself in retired places; she dies and makes no sign, yet she is the servant of every good. She lends dignity to drudgery; she gives equal grace to the palace and the hut.

How shall we make her attractive to our sense-veiled time? How exalt her in the eyes of all so that we shall seek her before praise or pelf? How shall we supplement the constraint of conscience in her favor? How shall we enforce the lesson of our earliest national history? Let us study in the light of this grace the example of the Perfect One. Above all that have ever lived he was faithful—a merciful and faithful High Priest—the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. Long before he came prophets foretold his coming. The Prophet Isaiah, centuries before Christ, saw his day and joyfully announced his character—"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." To this keynote of his career we invite your attention—"Faithfulness shall be the girdle of his reins."

Consider:

I. The Redeemer's girdle.



## II. Its admirable qualities.

The girdle was an essential part of Oriental dress. During hours of inactivity it might be laid aside. But when one was summoned to action the girdle was fastened around the loins and the loose garments were gathered within its grasp. It was fitted close to the person and was both a support and an ornament. It was thus that "Elijah girded up his loins and ran before Ahab," leaving in the distance the swift chariots of the King.

It is a frequent figure in the Scripture for a tense state of mind—a readiness for whatever exertion the situation may require. Peter, for example, exhorts the scattered, persecuted disciples, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end."

Faithfulness, like a girdle, adheres to the Redeemer's soul, says God by the prophet Jeremiah (13:11)—"As a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel." So does faithfulness encircle and cleave to the mind of Christ. It touches the whole circumference of his being. It gathers up into its loving embrace every faculty and feeling of his nature and makes them subservient to his mission. It holds in subjection even those elements that tend to lawlessness, that have in themselves no principle of government—the desires and appetites and passions—and makes them contribute to the fulfillment of a righteous purpose. It enters into every relation of his life and finds therein conspicuous illustration.

As a *relative and friend* he was girt about with faithfulness. What an example of obedience to parents he set in his return from Jerusalem to Nazareth, after his mind had been opened in the temple to the vision of his heavenly relationship. "*He* was subject unto *them*,"—places the rebuke of his example on the conduct of every son who casts off the yoke of parental authority because of his exaggerated notion of his own liberty or wisdom. The distance between Jesus and Joseph was wider far



than that between any young man and his parents and yet Jesus submitted himself without question to family authority. His fidelity as a son shines forth with equal splendor just at the close of his career. When the agonies of the crucifixion were wearing out his own life he thought of the torn bleeding heart of his Mother. With the tenderest solicitude about her comfort he commends her to the care of the disciple whom he loved. No untried guardian will do; no coarse, unsympathetic nature will answer for such a charge. Not till he saw the disciple standing by whom he loved, did he look down from the cross and say—"Woman, behold thy son," and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother." When according to the early prophecy of Simeon the sword was piercing her very soul, Jesus did all that a noble son could do to assuage her grief and fill the void that his approaching departure must make. He was faithful unto death to the Mother that bore him. There was a family made up of two sisters and a brother whose hospitality he often enjoyed and whose loving regard he prized and reciprocated. When the brother died Jesus soon came to Bethany to mingle his tears with theirs. What a tribute is given to his faithful friendship in the reposeful confidence they manifested in him in that hour of bereavement. How they clung to him, sitting at his feet, listening to his words. The strongest testimony one friend can give to another's fidelity is to lean upon him when the burden is great and the night is dark and the way is lonely. In such a time as this these sisters so unlike in many respects were one in their restful waiting upon Jesus and seemed by all their intercourse with him to declare—"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

There was a little band of twelve that circled round him as a magnetic center. How did he act toward them during the three busy years they companied together? He kept them as the apple of his eye. He was patient

with their infirmities. He was thoughtful about their physical wants, providing them safety and food and rest. With unwearying iteration he repeated the lessons of the Kingdom for their instruction. He forewarned them of the dangers they would encounter. He gave that last, best proof of friendship that he rebuked their faults as well as praised their virtues. He commended Nathaniel's guilelessness and the Baptist's rock-like firmness. To the same person on one occasion, he said — "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona," and on another — "Get thee behind me Satan," and love prompted the utterance in both cases alike. To the foolish and vengeful suggestions of the disciples concerning the Samaritan village, he answered — "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." O for a friendship such as this, that shrinks not from the task of rebuking our ignorance when love demands it, that loves us too well to be silent when we are blindly going on to our hurt. Whatever else is lacking we ask for fidelity in a friend. It was the girdle of the Redeemer's friendship that ought to be the girdle of ours.

The girdle of faithfulness was worn by the Redeemer *as a servant of God*. He was true to his trust. He fulfilled his mission to the uttermost. The announcement of the angel at his birth was — "Unto you is born a Saviour." The supreme design of the coming of the Son of God into this sin-cursed world was to save lost men. His own testimony is — "The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost." How did he carry out the purpose of God? Was there ever a time when it was out of his mind? Did it not color and energize his whole life? Paul describes him as a "merciful and *faithful* high priest in things pertaining to God." During his public ministry he never forgot for one moment for what he came. Wherever men were to be found, in the street or by the wayside, in the temple precincts or by the seashore, he had the same message of love and life for them all. The odium and degradation of sin in-

stead of setting bounds to his ministry in any case, were a challenge to the exhibition of his gracious saving power. The iniquitous tax-gatherer and the depraved harlot were each saved by a miracle of grace. To the diminutive, despised Zaccheus, he said—"Salvation is come to this house." It was the woman that was a sinner that loved much because she was forgiven much. The outcast lepers were the objects of his pity—were cleansed and their lips filled with praise. How many sermons he preached that taught with greater or less directness—"I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Let the proud Pharisee or the rich Sadducee find fault with him for receiving sinners. His course is not modified in the least, He will not suffer any shadow to fall on this transcendent glory of his life. It was the sinner that was the magnet that drew him from the skies. It was salvation for the sinner, rest for the heavy-laden, water for the famishing, life for the dead, that he came to proclaim. Even his miracles were parables of his saving power and all he did and said gave proof of his fidelity to the grand mission of salvation on which he was sent. He was ever thinking—"I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work."

As the night approaches his devotion to his appointed task becomes clearer still. At Jerusalem the end is to come. The sacrificial atonement is to be made. More than once he has had a full pre-vision of it all—the cross, the garden and the tomb. He forewarns his disciples of his crucifixion. What are his feelings in anticipation of the final onset of the powers of darkness? Does he go reluctantly to the ordeal? Or does the end in view make him run with eager feet to meet it? Does he welcome the cross because it is an essential element in his saving work? Listen to the record—"And it came to pass when the days were well-nigh come when he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to

Jerusalem." Hear Jesus himself say—"I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Resolutely he faces the very crisis of his undertaking. The cross is no catastrophe in his view, but the climax of his endeavor. He might call legions of angels to rescue him from his crucifiers—but how then will his mission be fulfilled? He might descend from the cross, but how would he save others if he saved himself? With unswerving fidelity he pressed forward to the conclusion of his unexampled task until with his expiring breath—may I say?—with exulting, triumphant spirit he cried—"It is finished!" Finished was his holy life and finished too his appointed work. The ransom is fully paid for man and deliverance is achieved. He is worthy of the name of Jesus because he has been faithful unto death, even the death of the cross that he might save his people from their sins.

Faithfulness was the girdle of the Redeemer in his *every day life as a man*. This is the true test of character. How does he deport himself on great occasions? is not half so good a searchlight as—"How does he act in ordinary life?"

Grant entering Vicksburg to receive the sword of Pemberton or reviewing the army at Washington at the close of the war was not revealed in his real personal glory as he was in his modest, magnanimous treatment of Lee and his army or in his indomitable purpose in writing his own memoirs in spite of his daily sufferings. The romances of Walter Scott are not so good a discovery of the nobility of the man as his heroic effort to liquidate a debt by the untiring use of his pen. Peter the Great deserved his name, not so much when in 1710, he returned to Moscow after the battle of Pultowa, in which he won a great victory over Charles XII of Sweden, to pass under triumphal arches and set all the bells of the capitol ringing, as when, as a ship-bulder in Amsterdam, he learned the arts he wished to teach to his subjects.

And Nicholas II, Peter's successor to the throne of all the Russias, will deserve the same title not because of the pomp and pageantry and festivities of his recent coronation but by serving well the vast populations that are under his dominion, by loosing the iron hand of oppression in his own territory and making his great empire not a menace but a hope of the world. Let us contemplate Jesus, not as transfigured on the mount, not as walking in the majesty of a God, on the unyielding sea, but as a man walking along the shores of Genesaret or the streets of Capernaum or traversing the hills and vales of Palestine. In this everyday life he was without a fault. He knew no sin neither was guile found in his mouth. Whatever company he was in he turned not a hairsbreadth from the path of strict rectitude.

What a plea for heart-morality we have in the sermon on the mount—a plea that only a soul conscious of its own untainted righteousness could make. He taught that a murderous act is not more truly a violation of the holy law than a murderous spirit, that a look or desire as much as an overt act may make one a law-breaker. He could dare to interpret in this penetrating way because his own heart was beating in constant harmony with the law of God.

Nor did he show any respect of persons in the judgments he announced. His enemies stated but the truth when they came to him saying—"Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men." These were the claims he had made in his own behalf. With impartial fidelity he spake the truth. His enemies meant no doubt to lure him unto some unguarded statement. In their short-sighted cunning they knew not that his candor was his shield. They understood not what men are slow to learn that entanglement comes from shuffling more than from



straight-forward movement. Neither could persecution turn him aside from his integrity or his testimony. It was included in his calculations of life. His expectation concerning himself is indicated in his requirement of his disciples — "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Thus he lived every day and as the events of providence unfolded in succession he was the same pure, candid, courageous, spotless man. Into the Father's plan of his life he wrought the outlines and graces of a perfect character. One night Nicodemus came to him and the interview transformed him and its results are still accumulating wherever the 3rd Chapter of John is read. He sat upon the well of Sychar and the opportunity of reaching a shameless woman was embraced notwithstanding his weariness. He went into the temple and the presence of the sordid money-changers stirred his righteous indignation and he drove them out. They hanged him on the cross between two thieves and he preached to them the Kingdom and one of them gave good heed and joined him in paradise shortly after. Thus everywhere he acted out the spirit of fidelity that was in him — circumstances changing, himself ever the same.

II. Its admirable qualities. The fact that the Redeemer wore it is sufficient recommendation to those who delight to be his followers. But let us call to mind some of its excellent qualities. I would I could so set them forth that you would, like the merchant man who found the pearl of great price, purchase it at whatever cost.

1. Let me mention its *adaptiveness*. It will fit any mind or any set of circumstances. It is however not so much adjustable as adjusting. It can lay claim to any combination of talents or events and make appropriate use of them.

Faithfulness does not need to stand upon the pedestal of high place in order to appear, nor require the brilliant



hues of genius to increase its charms. It is equally admirable in the King on the throne and the servant at his feet. The lowliest may exhibit it with the same attractiveness as the highest. Here, at least, if nowhere else, I may be the equal of a Gladstone or a Sherman — of a Spurgeon or a Moody — of a Whittier or a Tennyson. Nay I may exceed them in faithfulness, however inferior in mind or station.

This virtue is adapted to all kinds of situations. It may have a background of blandishments or it may rise to view amid adversities. However tried, it pursues the ever tenor of its way.

It is the same in the dark as in the light. It does not require publicity to shame it into exercise. It can make its brightest display in the lonely desert where no eye watches over the traveller but God's, or in the secret chamber where sleepless vigil is kept over a loved one, or in the personal interview where one soul stands face to face with another in friendly, faithful counsel. This girdle of fine linen may be yours or mine. Let us desire to wear it without change because it is adapted to every one of us in every spot our feet may tread.

2. Another attractive feature of this girdle is its *serviceableness to others*, its entire unselfishness. It looks not on its own things but on the things of others. It is not for glory or for gain that it is exercised. It carries one out of himself in a life of devotion to humanity, to truth and right, to God. It sets aside mercenary and personal considerations at the call of duty. No bribe can seduce it from the straight line of righteousness. It cannot be bought with money to vote for the worse candidate or cause against the better. It is not for sale at any price.

What an example of unfaithfulness we have in Balaam! He had too much conscience to go headlong into the enemy's camp. Yet he dallied with the messengers of Balak because of the rewards of iniquity.

He talked beautifully about the "Word of the Lord my God," and then went down step by step toward the bottomless pit. He could not *speak* against Israel and yet he could lay snares for their feet. Nothing could induce him to take an openly hostile attitude toward Israel and yet he could set on foot schemes that meant their utter overthrow. And what was the root of his zig-zag faithless course? It was selfishness, regard for his own wealth and honor and might. Why even his religion, his poetic strains of pious ejaculation, were vitiated by a selfish taint. Contrast with him another old Testament character of the same age of the world — Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. When he returned from viewing the promised land, he did not consult his ease or his fears, but the divine promise and said with decision — "Let us go up at once and possess it." He said what he thought without regard to the consequences that might follow. "I brought him word as it was in my heart," is his own version of the event. He gave an honest, fearless statement of the situation as it appeared to an eye of faith and not merely to the selfish eye of sense. If you wish to serve mankind, if a philanthropic spirit moves you, gird your loins with faithfulness and go forth to do what each day brings to you to be done as to the Lord and not to men.

3. Yet another admirable quality of this girdle is its *strength*. One chief design of the girdle was to give support to the body. The Lord says of his servant, Eliakim, "I will strengthen him with thy girdle."

So faithlessness girds the servant of God with strength. It means a holy will and that is the essential element of a strong, manly character. The faithful man may not express himself in vehement, intemperate speech, he may be neither extreme nor bitter.

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,  
Nor thine the zealot's ban;

Thou well canst spare a love of Thee  
Which ends in hate of man.

But the faithful man has convictions and can abide by them, he can suffer and be strong. John the Baptist was faithful to his mission and his generation — an outspoken preacher of righteousness and Jesus challenges his hearers — “What went ye out to see? a reed shaken with the wind?” No, no, he was a well-knit, sinewy man, like his prototype Elijah.

Lord Wellington embodies the Englishman's ideal of fidelity. The eldest of the Tennyson brothers, all of whom were poets, fitly describes him as —

That tower of strength  
Which stood foursquare to all the winds that blew.

The Earl of Beaconsfield describes him in equally fitting words —

Duty thine only idol, and serene  
When all are troubled; in the utmost need,  
Prescient; thy country's servant ever seen.

His well-poised soul did not make haste to change or flee. Shall Portugal be abandoned by the English troops? The answer was left with Wellington and it came in these loyal, vigorous words — “I conceive that the honor and interest of our country require that we should hold our ground here as long as possible; and please God I will maintain it as long as I can.”

There is no boasting, no bravado, no prophecy, but resolution, purpose inspired by patriotism and duty and recognition at the same time of his limitation by the pleasure of the Almighty.

In our little sphere of college life we had an example of fidelity in one whose earthly career was closed a few

months ago. Duty was his watchword and nothing was a trifle that contributed to its thorough discharge. After the weariness of his toilsome working day, the night comes and God giveth his beloved sleep. Let us not too soon forget the example he set us.

In the year 1681 it was observed that there were numerous cracks in the cupola of St. Peter's at Rome and however filled in they kept on widening until there was great alarm concerning the safety of this crowning work of Michael Angelo. Many theories were advanced and at length three eminent mathematicians were selected to examine and determine the causes of the breaches and suggest a remedy. They confirmed the fears of the friends of art by affirming that the pressure of weight was greater than the support, that ruin had been prevented so far by an iron collar around the base of the dome. They suggested as a remedy that six solid iron girders be put around the huge periphery of 420 ft. After much discussion their report was adopted and the gigantic undertaking begun. In 1747 the work was completed and by these invisible bands imbedded in the stone work the magnificent dome has been held in its place and after 150 years no sign of further damage appears.

Such an invisible cordon of iron is the spirit of faithfulness in the architecture of character. Make it strong and unyielding so that whatever pressure of interest or affection or desire may bear upon it, it may suffer not a seam to show itself in the building you erect.

Ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1896, let me urge you to put on this girdle your Redeemer wore. Remember the exhortation of Paul—"Let your loins be girt about with truth."

Most of you, perhaps all of you, acknowledge Him as your Lord and Master. I trust no one of you will pass out of college without a saving interest in Jesus Christ. Then follow the fashion he has set,

O Lord and Master of us all,  
Whatever our name or sign,  
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,  
We test our lives by thine.

Be faithful like him — be faithful to him, strive to be as true to his interests in the world as he was true to yours by his life and by his cross.

By and by he will come to reckon with you. Let your loins be girded and your lights burning and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord — Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.

To each of you he has given talents in greater or less number — to some one, to some two, to some five — “to each according to his several ability.” What use have you made? — what use do you intend to make of all that is entrusted to you? Keep near to the heart of Christ, keep Christ near to your heart, keep walking in his steps and you will be ever ready for the account you must render when he comes.

I have no greater wish concerning every one of you than this — that when life is done you may hear him say — “Well done! good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

## SERMON XII, 1897

### BIBLE ETHICS

*The law of the Lord is perfect.— Psalm 19: 7.  
Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.  
— Matthew 5: 48.*

THE highest element of man's complex being is his moral nature. Evolution reaches the height of its sublime attempt when it undertakes to account for man's ethical condition. Consciousness being the witness in the breast of all men attests that conscience is supreme — that the idea of right which it contains is superior to every other conception of the soul. Any religion claiming the allegiance of men must be able to stand the testing of man's moral nature — must keep pace with it in its highly developed state in the best civilization.

How is it with the religion of the Bible? Has civilization advanced beyond it at this crucial point? Has it in any degree ceased to be an ethical force in our modern life? Or, if so, have we only failed to live in accordance with its spirit and requirements? Maybe the fault is not with the religion, but a lessening regard to it. Our religion is less Biblical than before and therefore ill-adapted to the times. The flag is still in the van of progress, but the men have fallen behind it.

It will not be a useless service for us to examine the ethics of the Bible anew. We will find, I believe, that its day is still bright — that its larger prevalence is the need of the hour — that it gives promise of blessing to the race in all the future, long after the gloomy prophets shall have ceased their croaking.

The ethics of the Bible is the same in both dispensa-



tions. The new commandment of the Christian dispensation is an old commandment which men had from the beginning. It is as old as Sinai — as old as humanity itself with the law written on its heart. Behind the rugged exterior of the Mosaic prohibitions, there lies the same principle of love that is reflected in the beautiful beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Much rough scaffolding that was serviceable enough in its day is now removed and the essential fabric of divine law appears in full view. The one is to the other as a seed to a flower, or as the undeveloped stock to the mature plant. The one is associated with the unfolding of a blessed hope of a coming Messiah; the other is wrought into the very texture of the history of a Redeemer who has actually come.

That summary of duty given by the Saviour was sanctioned by the Scribe who was learned in the law and distinctly connected with the past by the Saviour himself when he said — “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” — Matt. 22: 34-40, Deut. 6: 4, Lev. 19: 18. We may then take the last form of the revelation and find in it what is the substance of the whole. Christian ethics may engage our study as the full-blown flower — the fully developed form of Biblical ethics. What saith Christ? What say his apostles? What was Christ? What were his servants who followed in his steps?

Ethics has been variously defined as the science of conduct, the science of duty, the science of moral character. It has been called the “philosophy of the art of the true life.” With a little greater stress on the internal elements of moral life, it has been called the “science of self-revelation.” It is the character within that is manifested in the life without that gives importance to conduct. It is the self — the personality behind the act that gives it all its value.

Christian ethics sets forth the principles of morals in-

cluded in the Christian system. What are the laws of right conduct which it announces? What are the ideals with which it awakens aspirations after better things? What models does it offer for our imitation? With what thoughts does it constrain us to the life of duty? Questions such as these arise at the very threshold of our subject.

I. Christianity presents a high ethical standard. "The law of the Lord is perfect." It re-affirms the moral law contained in the ten commandments given on Sinai. "Think not," say Jesus, "that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." There is no lowering of the demands of righteousness. The standard is absolutely right and all moral beings in God's universe must conform to it or bear the penalty of disobedience. The morality of the Bible is imperative and not a matter of expediency. It says—"Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." It chimes in with the voice of conscience, declaring in thunder tones—"I ought."

During the Sesqui-Centennial celebration of Princeton University, President Patten was reported as affirming that Princeton stood for "comparative morality." Whereupon some one scenting for heresy in an unlikely place took exception to the suspicious phrase, as if the mission of Princeton were the striking of moral averages. But the report was a misrepresentation that was corrected in a subsequent issue by substituting "imperative" for "comparative," so as to make the famous institution, instead of a leveller, a staunch defender of the old morality, with the categorical imperative of conscience behind it and the sanction of the Bible signature—Thus saith

the Lord. The Bible keeps the conscience in the place of command where nature placed it. It only clarifies its decisions and re-inforces its authority. It never encourages indifference, nor balancing of results in human happiness, but proclaims the imperative obligation of the divine commands. It is the voice of God we hear and there is nothing for us to do but to obey.

This moral obligation extends to every moral being and every moral act. Thus the Bible emphasizes the importance of the individual—something greatly needed in a time like ours when so many industrial, social, and philosophic foes to individuality are found. It singles each man out from the mass and addresses him in warning or entreaty or command. It presses upon him the thought of his own responsibility for his acts—that before the infallible tribunal every man must bear his own burden. Every word and thought and purpose—every secret thing, will be tested by the moral law and approved or disapproved in the day of judgment. As the law of gravitation pervades all nature and equally holds a world in space or attracts a falling apple to the earth or a particle of matter to its fellow, so the moral law of God reigns in the world of moral action, holding sway over prince and peasant, over thought and word and deed, over feeling and desire. We cannot escape it, we cannot conjure it away. We may dismiss it from our thoughts but we cannot get it out of its realm and sooner or later the law-breaker will come to grief. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

What now does the moral law contain? What is its essence as interpreted in the New Testament? What is the distinctive content of Christian ethics?

It is not necessary that we refuse all credit to heathen moralists. We may acknowledge that many beautiful and true sentiments, many right principles were taught by Socrates and Plato and Aristotle and Seneca and Cicero and others. We may even admit that there is

scarcely any Christian virtue that has not some feeble adumbration somewhere in their writings or reported conversations and that the Christian may be benefitted by reading such a treatise as the "Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle," at least as much as by reading Spencer's, "Data of Ethics," or even the writings of some Christian philosophers. What then has Christ added to morality?

1. The morality of Christ is peculiar in its completeness. There is not one of the great names of antiquity that gives a rounded, flawless system. Plato introduced such vagaries into his plan of human relations as would in our time take him at once out of the list of sober advisers. Aristotle, whom Dr. Thornwell, a competent judge in this line, pronounced the author of the "finest discussion in the whole compass of ancient philosophy," could advise the heartless exposure of sickly infants. We read with kindling, glowing admiration the story of the death of Socrates. We place him among the heroes who calmly and without complaint die for a cause. He seems to us like the one great man of his time — a great teacher and a great character. But he had his limitations. His domestic life will not bear scrutiny and even in the closing scenes his family are dismissed that he may converse with his friends. Xenophon, his loyal friend, years after his death, records his impressions and recollections of the man and his conversations. But there is a fly in the ointment — Socrates would have stood better with the world if some conversations had not been reported. As we come upon his advice to an immoral woman how to use her charms so as to captivate the unwary, we are shocked and he at once descends to a lower moral rank in our estimation. How different from all these partial, imperfect teachers is Christ. Says Dr. Peabody — "The peculiarity of Christ is that he brought all moral laws together, so that we find nothing lacking in his morality, while at the same time there is nothing that ought not

to be there." It is the symmetry of his character and teaching that makes them unique.

2. The morality of Christ is peculiar in the emphasis it places on the milder virtues. It exalts meekness and patience and gentleness, forgiveness and charity, brotherly-kindness and courtesy. Aristotle does talk of meekness as a "mean state on the subject of angry feelings," and then damns it with faint praise. "The meek man seems to err rather on the side of defect; for he is not inclined to revenge but rather to forgive." . . . "It is like a slave to endure insults offered to one's self and to overlook them when offered to one's relations." Seneca writes an essay upon Anger, in which he tells us of the insolence of an Athenian ambassador toward Philip of Macedon which called forth the admirable counsel of Philip—"Pray tell the Athenians, that it is worse to speak such things than to hear and forgive them." Yet Seneca pleads for and practices suicide, which flees away from the will of God instead of yielding to it.

But how different it is with Christ. These less conspicuous virtues are everywhere commended in the New Testament. They constitute the very atmosphere which the Christian religion creates. Read the Sermon on the Mount once more—that early declaration of principles of the kingdom of God. Matt. 5:3-10. "Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . . Blessed are they that mourn. . . . Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. . . . Blessed are the merciful. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart. . . . Blessed are the peace-makers. . . . Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Take up any epistle of Paul or of Peter or of John and you will scarcely fail to find the same lessons reproduced. Rom. 12:10, 17-21.—"Recompense to no man evil for evil. . . . If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men. . . . Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil



with good." (Eph. 4; 31, 32 — Let all bitterness, etc. 4: 1-3.) James 3: 17 — The wisdom that is from above, etc.) 1 Pet. 2: 20. "What glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps."

Paley says, "The preference of the patient to the heroic character is a peculiarity of the Christian institution," and affirms that "no two things can be more different than the heroic and the Christian character." I should rather say that patience and courage are twin graces. Each involves superiority to pain which may be either endured or resisted. He who bears patiently is in the highest sense heroic. Grant was not less a hero on Mt. McGregor than in the campaign of Vicksburg. There is a bravery of the pugilist and the foolhardy. But is it as noble and admirable as that of the man who welcomes hardships and privations, hunger and cold that he may carry salvation to the perishing? If Paul be an example of the virtues he so strongly urged, of humility, forgiveness and kindness, he was none the less but all the more a man of heroic mould, counting not his life dear unto him that he might compass the ends of his blessed ministry. Let us get rid of the thought that vociferation has anything to do with brave action, that courage must ignore wisdom. It may be the veriest cowardice to do what men applaud as courageous. It may be the highest heroism to resist the temptation to stand well with the multitude. The glory of the Christian morality is that it weds again what the spirit of the world divorced — that it brings into perfect harmony the active and passive virtues. The Christian religion teaches us to undertake great things on the one hand and to endure all things on the other.

3. The morality of the Gospel is peculiar in the central



place it gives to love to man. In one view this is not new, for the second table of the law is—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor." The scope of neighborhood is enlarged so as to include the whole human race. Whoever belongs to humanity should be the object of our love. Let the Jew love the Samaritan; let the Christian love his enemy and do good to him. Says the author of "*Ecce Homo*"—"While the new morality incorporated into itself the old, how much ampler was its compass. A new continent in the moral globe was discovered. Positive morality took its place by the side of negative. To the duty of not doing harm, which may be called justice, was added the duty of doing good, which may properly receive the distinctively Christian name of Charity."

Personal holiness is not ignored. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," is a command of Christ. But holiness is best expressed in service and service best develops holiness. A life that terminates on self is incomplete. Like the spring that keeps itself fresh and sweet by pouring its waters out to gladden the earth, so the soul is sanctified as it blesses mankind by loving service. What a eulogy of love is that of Paul in the 13th of Corinthians? "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. . . . Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." What patience! What self-forgetfulness! What blindness to faults! What hopefulness! is here expressed. There is nothing too hard for Christian love—for that enthusiasm for humanity that is inculcated and infused by the Gospel. It can carry a refined woman into unkempt vermin-infested huts that she may tell the story of salvation. It can support the missionary as he travels through swamps and jungles, sometimes sick and sometimes assailed by

those he seeks to save. It can drive a Shaftsbury out at midnight from a home of elegance and comfort to watch for the soul of a street Arab. "Love never faileth,"—nay, love must not fail from the life of the Church, else the morality of Christ will be vitiated at its very foundation, will be stricken at its very heart. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

The night has a thousand eyes  
And the day but one;  
Yet the light of the whole world dies  
With the setting sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes  
And the heart but one;  
Yet the light of a whole life dies  
When love is done.

II. Christianity is an ethical *force*. It is more than a system of morals. It is first of all a religion, while reflecting the moral image of its divine author, and the religion secures sway from the morality.

It furnishes a model for right living in the perfect life of Jesus. His example illuminates the ideal life which his precepts set forth. It might have been considered before this as the embodiment of the standard. But we look upon it now rather as a means of influence—as a powerful incentive to good. The power of example is proverbial. We are imitative, impressible creatures from childhood till the end of life. A few persons begin to stare in pity and dismay at a fainting woman and a whole audience rises to imitate their action. Spontaneously we laugh or yawn or cry with others. A man or woman in conspicuous place is seen of many and all who look upon them, especially if it be with interest and approval, become assimilated to them. As we read the life of a man, we come into a sort of fellowship with him

and as face answers to face in the mirroring water, so we become like the men whose biographies we read.

What a stream of holy influence issues forth from the life of Jesus as we come into touch with it in the believing, sympathetic study of it in the Gospels. John Stuart Mill, though educated from childhood into irreligion, says this of Jesus — "Not even now could it be easy for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." We learn what Christ would approve by what he said and did — by the concrete testimony of his spotless life. It is his example of passionate regard for humanity that is kindling the fires of philanthropy and missionary zeal in Christian hearts everywhere, and leading the nations forward, in spite of reactionary action of political leaders to universal peace.

The ethical force of Christianity arises not only from the model but from the motives it furnishes. His example is only one of many incentives to a right life. They spring out of the religion — the redemption of Christ.

Ely in his "Economics" remarks incidentally — "The greatest thing in human life is its incentives." Without them action is routine and drudgery — a mechanic thing — a shell — a sham.

It is at this point that merely human systems have failed. They lacked motive force and, therefore, did not powerfully influence even the few who received them. How different with Christianity! How clear and luminous its announcement of the immortality of the soul! How solemn its appeal to the hereafter with its rewards and punishments! It does not attach the soul to an iceberg of abstractions, but brings it into contact with the warm, living, sympathetic spirit of a personal God. It teaches men to say — "Our Father who art in heaven," and in the communion of worship we become like him. Realizing our common fatherhood in God, we cannot

fail to recognize at the same time the brotherhood of men. The religion of Christ thus provides in its very fundamental principles the motives that give power to Christian morals.

But there are even stronger and more characteristic motives than these, springing out of the cross of the Redeemer. Christian friends, what is it that constrains you to practical Godliness? What moves you to be patient and brave, pure and strong? What makes you wish to put your steps in his as you trace them in his word? Is it not gratitude that attracts you to his side in loving conformity to his will? Is it not love feebly answering his that lifts the commonest meanest act out of the hell of drudgery into the heaven of service? Is it not the abiding sense of his love as seen in his cross that constrains you to live not unto yourself but unto Him who died for you and rose again?

Alas, it is sometimes true that even these motives do not operate as they ought. Why is it? Have we ceased to love Him who redeemed us? Has the impress of his love passed from our souls? A soldier in the army of Napoleon, when a shell fell near by, sprang between the emperor and the shell to shield his master's life at the risk of his own. The act extorted from the lips of Napoleon the words of admiration — "What a soldier!" Who among us is ready to fling ourselves into the breach for Christ and his cause? What meaning would these words have concerning any one of us? Would it sound like eulogy or derision if the Master should say of us — "What a soldier!"

Let us further add that the ethical force of our religion arises from the fact that Christianity is a life. It takes account of sin — of man's spiritual impotence — of the need of divine favor and help. It brings God to the aid of reason, conscience and will. Men are begotten again by the Gospel and brought into living union with the life-giving Person of Jesus Christ. At the very

threshold of the kingdom, we hear the distinct alternative—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Life not only lies in God's favor, but courses through the soul, renewing and vitalizing every faculty and principle. Among the last words of the Saviour to his disciples were these,— "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Here is the secret of holiness—real heart-holiness. Without this union of life with Christ Jesus, even the morality of the Bible would be a dead morality. Only when faith unites us to Christ and by unremitted exercise keeps us in fellowship with him—only when the regenerating, invigorating power of the Holy Ghost is experienced, is there the principle and potency of a new life. Then will be produced—not the obedience of the letter merely—nor mere imitations of living things, but the real fruits and flowers of holy living. Think not that you can illustrate the Christian morality apart from Christ. The infidel may indeed breathe in the atmosphere of Christendom and plume himself on his good life without owning the debt he owes to his Christian environment. But every truly Christian virtue is a grace—a gift of God—and only adorns those who are partakers of the grace of God in Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness.

As we asked at the beginning, let us ask again—How stands the religion of the Bible when the 20th century is nearing the horizon? Does it meet the demands of the present civilization? Was there ever more need of an inflexible standard such as it gives? When social and industrial problems are every day growing in perplexity is there not need of calmness and patience and disinterest-



edness and forgiveness that enter so largely into the Christian ideal of manhood? Will not the meek inherit the earth in our day? And do we not need the powerful motives of the Gospel — motives from the cross uplifted in the past and from the crown of immortality that looms up in the future? And is not the Divine inworking as needful now as ever that the Divine law may be re-written on the heart and man learn to love his neighbor as he loves himself? Christianity is yet in the vigor of its strength and is keeping pace with the world as it advances toward the millennium of perfected brotherhood. Its eye is on the future and nothing can disappoint its hope for itself and the world.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call  
retreat,  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment  
seat,  
Oh! be swift my soul to answer him! be jubilant, my feet!  
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me,  
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men  
free!

While God is marching on.

We are just beginning to learn the meaning of — Thou shalt love thy neighbor. Let us march on with God — enlarging our view — widening our sympathies — till everywhere every man possesses to the full the heritage that comes to him from God.

Young men and women of the class of 1897, let me bespeak from every one of you a life of unspotted morality. Be centres of influence wherever you go in favor of sound morals. Culture is a great word, but character is a



greater. Let a noble character shine out in your every word and act.

Take this Bible for your guide. Let it be the light to your feet and the lamp to your path. Consult it often — consult it thoughtfully — consult it prayerfully — consult it daily. Its morality may be considered a little old-fashioned in some places, but it will be none the less adapted to the times. By it your father and mother have squared their lives and commended themselves to their generation. Follow in their footsteps and you will commend yourselves to yours. Live moral lives, yet be not mere moralists. Let your morality spring out of your religion. Be men and women of God. Be Christ-filled and Christ-like. Seek large measures of the enlightening and renewing Spirit. Then live according to the larger light you receive and you will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour on earth and make yourselves ready for the inheritance of the saints in light. As the aged John wrote to his children in the Gospel in his third letter, so let me say to you as you pass out from under our care, —“Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

“Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honorable, though we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and ye are strong; for this also we wish even your perfection.”

“The law of the Lord is perfect. Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

## SERMON XIII, 1898

### WORK

*I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day.—  
John 9: 4.*

IN any occupation or course of life there will come occasions of doing good. "It was as Jesus *passed forth* from thence he saw a man named Matthew (9: 9) sitting at the receipt of custom, and he saith unto him, Follow me, And he arose and followed him." It was as Jesus *passed by* he saw a man which was blind from his birth,—"and he prescribed a way for his recovery and he washed and came seeing." In both these instances what Jesus saw in the most casual way gave direction to his action. In the one case he won a soul for his service, in the other he brought relief to a sufferer. So he lived his life, taking advantage of circumstances as they arose to fulfil his mission of mercy and grace. As he passed along he found the occasions of his greatest service.

It may be so with us, if we only have something to give out and are watchful for the opportunity to do so. But if we pass along with our eyes closed and our souls empty, if we are either barren or blind, we lose the chances of doing good that are ever opening as we go.

As you or I pass by is anyone the better for it? You pass this way but once, what springs of action are you touching? What footprints are you leaving behind you? Are you awakening in your companion any thrill of holy purpose? Are you putting out your hand to check him in a career of recklessness and folly? We touch other lives as we go by, and by silent influence, or conscious act, or timely word, we may, like Jesus, bless them for both

worlds. Whether we will or not will depend on whether or not we catch the spirit of our Master and model our lives after his. What earnestness is expressed here! What depth! What intensity! What compulsion of love! As he passed along, at sight of a poor blind man, the impulses of a love that passes knowledge already stirring within him, he says to his disciples,—“I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.”

These words indicate that Jesus recognized,

I. The necessity of Work. He says, “I must work.” That was the law of his being—the impulse of his unspoiled nature, that had never been lethargized by sin.

All nature is busy. Matter is inert, we say; yet there is not a particle that does not gravitate toward and act upon its fellow. And what abounding activity we see in all forms of life! The seed sown reaches out thread-like hands to appropriate the elements of the soil for its development; it reaches upward through the sod and toward the sky; it responds to the embrace of the air and the kiss of sunlight; it shoots forth and buds, and blossoms, and bears fruit. How all nature seems to leap in the spring-time into myriad forms of blade, and leaf, and flower, covering the fields with fragrance. A giant spirit awakes and with invisible hands more deft than any woman's, weaves a covering of beauty for the earth. Everywhere there is movement, and energy and victory.

All forms of animal life begin, too, to creep or fly forth after the long sleep of winter. The lambs play upon the hill-side and the forests become vocal with the songs of the birds. “All nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—the bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—and winter slumbering in the open air, wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring, and I, the while, the sole unbusy thing, nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.”

Shall this word of the poet be exemplified in the life of any one of us? Shall men or women be the “sole un-

busy thing," in this busy world of God? Let it not be so! Rather let nature shame us into activity. Let it stimulate us to purposeful, laborious work that exceeds the bounds of nature herself. It is a false sentiment that makes idleness respectable, that makes one shrink from honorable labor. To the simpering, shallow boast—"I do not need to work," Jesus answers—"I do need to work—I must work." He emphasizes the teaching of nature, that idle hands and idle minds are a monstrosity in a universe like ours. He re-announces the old command of the decalogue—"Six days shalt thou labor." He prepares us to hear the command of Paul that, "If any would not work, neither should he eat."

The first work of Jesus of which we hear was work with the hands. Like every young Jew, he learned a trade and worked with his father at the carpenter's bench. He was reared according to the Rabbinical principle, that, "Whoever does not teach his son a trade is as if he brought him up to be a robber." He was the carpenter and the carpenter's son. Every tradesman may walk the earth with a loftier step because of his fellowship with Jesus in manual labor. One of the recent English poets describes the feeling of Kinship with Joseph, the Carpenter, in the following homely verses—

Isn't this Joseph's Son? — ay, it is He;  
Joseph, the Carpenter,—same trade as me,  
I thought as I'd find it — I knew it was here,  
But my sight's getting queer.

I don't know right where as His shed must ha' stood,  
But often as I've been a-planing my wood,  
I've took off my hat just with thinking of He  
At the same work as me.

He wa'nt that set up that he couldn't stoop down  
And work in the country for folks in the town,

And I'll warrant he felt a bit pride, like I've done,  
At a good job begun.

I think of as how not the parson hissen  
As a teacher and father and shepherd of men,  
Not he knows as much of the Lord in that shed,  
Where he earned his own bread.

Nothing could be more fitting than that Jesus should appear in such a form. Had he appeared as a king or a courtier, a priest, or a Dives, how different the relation he would sustain to men. He would be separated from them by the conventional barriers of rank and place. It is easy enough for the King to descend to the humble toilers, but not so easy for the toiler to be unembarrassed in approach to the King. Jesus was conspicuous only by his worth. He stood forth in the dignity of his own noble nature. He thus put honor upon common manhood — upon the lowest as well as the highest. How can any follower of Jesus think or speak disparagingly of those on whom Jesus himself puts honor by his own toil? How silly is that pride of idleness — that looks down upon the man or woman that serves by honorable labor — that gives not sympathy but scorn to those who —

Work — work — work,  
From weary chime to chime  
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumbed  
As well as the weary hand.

Let the Christ spirit prevail and a wider sympathy will bind every man to his fellow, and unite all in a common brotherhood, showing itself in a mutual service.

At the age of thirty he entered upon a new line of work. He became a teacher, a preacher, a philanthropist. It was no uncommon thing, Edersheim tells us, "for the rabbis to rise from the humble walks of life. Hillel was

a wood-cutter; his rival, Shammai, a carpenter, and among the celebrated Rabbis of aftertimes we find shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, sandal-makers, smiths, potters, builders — in short every variety of trade." Jesus' previous life of manual labor seasoned him for the higher employment. He learned patience and perseverance — he grew in wisdom and in readiness for his work. When he entered upon it, it was with no misgiving, no need of experimenting, no retracing of mistaken steps. He plunged into it like one thoroughly equipped, with a plan fully developed in his own mind and a purpose fully formed. He wrought with untiring zeal to the end of his course. If there were days of retirement and rest, they were but the husbanding of strength for further labors, and were taken for others' sake rather than his own. He might be weary at the side of the well of Sychar, but not too weary to enter into conversation with a sinful woman and guide her footsteps heavenward. He gave the night as well as the day to his beneficent ministry, and therefore Nicodemus was welcome to the interview that settled his destiny. He was preaching in the synagogue or by the lakeside, or in the court of an Oriental house; he was entering into the distresses of men and women, of heart-wrung fathers, and widowed mothers, and orphaned sisters, of the blind, and halt, and diseased, and demonized. It may be all summarized in the phrase, "He went about doing good."

Yes, the example of Jesus magnifies work. It pours contempt on the idler. It rebukes the man or woman who squanders life in doing nothing. Would that every one among you might breathe in the spirit of Jesus and be impelled by it to say—"I must work." I am an immortal being, endowed above the sloth and the butterfly; I feel within me the instincts and aspirations of a human soul, pressing for expression:—"I must work." I see a world in need, that lays just claim to the service I am able to render; that abounds in ignorance, want



and sin; I cannot look out upon it without aroused sympathies and a sense of shame if I put forth no exertion for its relief — *I must work*. Work is the nourisher of self-respect, the source of well-being as well as of wealth; close of kin to everything lofty in human experience. "All true work," says Carlyle, "is sacred; in all true work, were it but handlabor there is something of divineness. Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven. Sweat of the brow, and up from that to sweat of the brain; sweat of the heart,— up to that, "agony of bloody sweat which all men call divine. O brother! if this is not worship, then I say the more pity; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky."

II. These words declare the fact that Jesus was *conscious of a divine mission*. His work was an allotment of the Father. "I must work the works of *Him that sent me*." Our Saviour is himself divine. His works of infinite power and mercy are his own as well as the Father's. The distinct personality of each is implied in the words, "*Him that sent me*." But they are one in substance and one in purpose. In the account of the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath day, the Jews are represented as persecuting Jesus for his merciful deed because it was done on the Sabbath, thus making the Sabbath a fetter instead of a blessing. Jesus answered them in a way that increased the offense to their blinded eyes—"My Father worketh hitherto and I work." They understood him to assert his own equality with God, and sought the more to kill him. But he rose higher with each attack declaring with tremendous emphasis — Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth, and he will show him greater works than these that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the

Son quickeneth whom he will, for the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him."

To no mere creature could these mighty works be committed. They require the resources of the infinite for their fulfilment. Yet it is as a voluntary subordinate — a willing mediator — a Son in the assumed relation of a servant that all these mighty works are done by Him. They are the works of one sent — sent by the Father.

How often he refers to his appointment in the discourses recorded in the Gospel by John. "I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (5:30); "I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me" (6:30); "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me" (7:29); "I know Him for I am from him and he hath sent me." I have counted nineteen times in which he speaks of himself as one sent.

Who can describe the mission of Jesus?

Who can measure its tremendous sweep?

We may say as of no other, that we read his life and know fully what his mission was, for he fulfilled it perfectly. It was not for his own generation only, but for all the generations of men. It was the opening of a fountain that has been pouring blessing through all ranks, and times and climes. It was the germination of a seed that has shot forth branches which extend inviting shelter to all the nations and races of the world. Though we cannot fathom its meaning and follow it out to its farthest reach of application, we summarize it in fitting expressions from the word itself. He came to do God's will — "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He came to fulfil all righteousness by personal obedience to the

divine law. He came to set us an example that we should walk in his steps. More than all, he came to save sinners — to seek and save the lost. His grand mission was to bring salvation to a lost world, and he could not slacken his efforts till it was accomplished. At a later hour in his life, as he is talking with the Father, we hear him exulting in the completion of it. "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." And when at last he breathed out his life on the cross, pouring out his life-blood on the altar of humanity, he cried with a loud voice — "It is finished! It is finished!" His mission is accomplished and the world is redeemed.

"Him that sent me," — may these words be echoed by others besides Jesus? We read of another — "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." Can we put any man's name into that sentence and express the truth? Has God sent ordinary men and women into the world to subserve an end? Have you and I a mission to perform from which we cannot escape? We may not be able to accept the view that design is intuitively discerned in everything — in the clod of the valley as well as in the wondrous mechanism of the eye. But can we deny that every man shows marks of design in his own being and in relation to the beings about him that make it manifest that he is a creature with a mission. It may be a humble one or it may be similar to many others. It may be a little niche that he is to fill; he may be a small link in a long chain. But, however lowly the service we any of us render, it is ennobled by the thought that it is that to which we are appointed. How it dignifies any work to be able to say of it — "It is the work of the Lord for me."

Some men have been used of God without recognizing the Hand that held them. Napoleon was a man of destiny, but not a man of God. Alexander did a mighty service to the world in carrying Greek civilization to the ends of the earth. The Greek language, which became the vehicle of the Christian revelation, was carried with

it, and thus a channel was prepared for the spread of the Gospel among the nations. He was, in an important sense, a forerunner of Christ, though he knew it not. In fact, every man, good or bad, is under the control of God's providence, and is working out his decretive will.

But the happy men and women are they who, like Jesus, see and feel that they are sent of God. They recognize the divine hand in their lives. They are asking God the way that they may walk in it — asking God as he speaks in the predilections and powers of body and mind; asking God as he speaks to them through the providential setting of their lives, and not less as he speaks to their hearts by the still small voice of the Spirit.

Here is one of whom we say — “He is a man with a mission,” or, “She is a woman with a mission.” Such a one was Wilberforce or Howard, or Florence Nightingale, or Frances Willard. But we make a broader claim than this. To everyone under God's government is assigned a place and a work. There is a service to which each one of us is sent, and a blessed thing it is to know that we have found our distinctive mission and are in the way of fulfilling it. How satisfying a thing is a life that is spent in waiting on God for orders. A letter from a sailor on board the *Olympia*, to his parents in Atchison, Kansas, written before the naval victory that made the name Dewey famous, told that the Commodore issued these instructions to his men in anticipation of an engagement, — “Keep perfectly cool, and pay attention to nothing but orders.” It is the right command for the soldiers of the cross. “Be careful for nothing,” is a very good biblical equivalent for, “Keep perfectly cool”; and single eyed obedience is a frequent New Testament requirement of all who love the Lord. “Ye are my friends,” says Jesus, “if you do whatsoever I command you.”

I wish I could make you all see that your comfort and serviceableness and glory depend upon your cordial con-

sent to the divine mastery of your lives. There is no earthly halo that can compensate for the absence of the divine favor or approval. The real glory of every one of us is found in service to God and humanity — to humanity under the direction of God.

There is no virtue that so excites our admiration as courage. Every exhibition of it stirs the hearts of men. But, like every noble thing, it has its counterfeits and its exaggerations. I submit to you that no courage is clearly admirable that has no worthy end in view. There is a difference between mere hardihood and heroism. He who sacrifices his life to no purpose is a fool. The suicide dares to throw himself under the wheels of the locomotive — to rush unbidden away from ills of time to the uncertainties of eternity — and we call him a coward. He who risks everything on a daring venture when nothing is to be achieved thereby, is regarded as fool-hardy. But he who has a mission and bravely fulfils it is a hero in the eyes of all. Lieut. Hobson's fearless action in sinking the *Merrimac* in the channel at Santiago de Cuba received unstinted praise not merely because of his bravery but because of his brilliant success in gaining an important end. There was a reason for his attempt that justified the hazard of life and helped to make his act glorious.

Young men! Young women! There is room for heroic action in every life. And is there not the inspiration of the sublimest courage in the thought that God is behind you, that there is a mission on which he has sent you and that there is no such thing as fail as long as you keep your eye on your Master for orders.

III. These words show that Jesus *recognized the limitation of his earthly activity.*

It is only a day and the night is coming,

I must work the works of him that sent me *while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work.*

His working time was short as compared with many



others, and shows how it is possible to compress into a few years more value than the accumulating centuries, with all their brave men and true, could gather. Out of that brief life flowed the stream of beneficent influence that has been ever since irrigating the waste places of the earth, and will flow on and on till the whole desert earth shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Not a moment of that life was idle. Every moment of it was fully and worthily spent. The coming night cast its shadow of seriousness over the whole working day.

In one respect his life differed from ours. He *knew beforehand* what each day and hour required. He ordered himself from day to day with strict regard to the line marked out for him. We hear him saying, "Mine hour is not yet come," and the evangelist John declares on several occasions, by way of explanation of what occurred, "His hour was not yet come." With him, indeed, every hour was laden with a mission of its own — of duty or endurance, of sympathy or speech or power. Let the hour pass unused and it would never return, and its mission would be lost.

The same is true, in large measure, with you or me. You cannot compensate for the past by cheating the present. You cannot turn the mill with the water that has gone by. If days and years are lost, they cannot be regained. They remain as blank spaces in the record of your lives and ground of perpetual regret. Use, then, the moments as they fly in building up a larger self, and in serving man and honoring God.

"The night cometh! — comes steadily — may come suddenly. We cannot afford to procrastinate concerning the thing that must be done. The work of personal salvation — the work of building up a character — the achievement you have promised yourself to make, on which your very heart is set — will you let any of these



hang on the uncertain hope of coming day, when all you are absolutely sure of is coming night, when no man can work? Would you delay repentance for that fearful sin? Would you cherish still that malignant purpose? Would you count the darkness a sufficient cloak for your misdeeds? Would you do any of those things that your reason and conscience condemn if you knew that the searchlight of eternity were just at the door.

I wish for everyone of you a long working day but I do not know nor do you. In this very year we have been taught the old lesson that youth is no sufficient shield against the sharp sickle of death. Therefore rest not, haste not, while the light of day still shines upon you.

"The night cometh when no man can work." Jesus but recoins the golden precept of Solomon in Ecclesiastes—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." There is no second probation—no additional opportunity of doing the works on which hang the everlasting future.

The night cometh! blessed be God it may be transfigured into a morning. The day of this life may close into night only to open on a brighter day beyond. It was so with Jesus, who through the gateway of death entered into his glory. It may be so with you or me if the present working day is well-spent in abiding in Christ, following after Christ and in winning others to Christ. "They that be wise shall shine as the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1898, let me urge you to be ambitious to make the most and best of your lives whether they be longer or shorter. You remember the little poem which Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote about the chambered shell of the Pearly Nautilus. It contains good meditation for you as you lift your eyes toward the future that awaits you. The story of the creature

that built and inhabited the shell and the lesson its out-reaching life contains are best told in the poet's own words —

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the last year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last found home and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine out-grown shell by life's unresting sea.

How may each of you build more stately mansions for your soul as the years go by? How can you make every new year wider than the last? How can you make your dead selves the stepping stones to nobler things? Let me commend to you the example of Jesus as we have been viewing it through his word as containing the secret of a growing, expanding soul.

Work! Work under orders from heaven! Work with the energy of one who has only twelve hours to work in. Catch the energetic spirit of the Master as he says —“ I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day.”

And when you pass out of “ Life’s unresting sea,” into the haven of eternity may you be included in that happy number of whom it is written —“ His servants shall serve him, And they shall see his face and his name shall be in their foreheads.” May the Lord guide you every one by his counsel while you live and receive you at last into his glory.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

## SERMON XIV, 1899

### THE MINISTRY OF SERVICE

*I am among you as he that serveth.—Luke 22: 27.*

THE Saviour was no enemy to rightful authority. He wrought a miracle in order to pay the tribute exacted by the Roman Government. He kept clear of the meshes the wily Jews were spreading for his feet, by the discriminating declaration—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." But he was the foe to all forms of tyranny. His religion is in deadly antagonism to the despotic principle. It announces the equality of men before God. It everywhere undermines despotism, slavery and caste. It changes the monarch from an instrument of oppression unto a servant of the people. It transforms official position into a public trust. There are official relations that obtain in both Church and state that ought not to be disowned. The ruler and the ruled may recognize what is due to and from each other without any assumption of personal superiority on the part of the one or loss of personal dignity on the part of the other. It remains true, however, whatever distinctions we allow, that the ruler is not more than a man and the ruled is not less than a man.

The Kingdom of Christ is essentially different from the Kingdoms of the world. The spirit of lordship—of pride and rank—prevails in the world. "But ye shall not be so," says Christ to his disciples. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of service—not only to their common Lord but to one another. Jesus teaches this lesson both by precept and example. He could well rebuke the un-

seemly contention for place among his disciples because his whole life was free from self-seeking. In the consciousness and courage of the truth of what he spake he says—"Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that doth serve? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But *I am among you as he that doth serve.*" Whatever claim concerning himself a man makes must be true or it will rebound against the rebuke he is administering. Yet Jesus knowing full well that their familiarity with his life would put his words to the test said, with all confidence of their confirmation,—*"I am among you as he that serveth."* Consider—

I. The condescending humility of Jesus. His most amazing condescension took place when being the Son of God he became man. *"I am among you,"*—in *that* he humbled himself most of all. *"The word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* In this commingling with men, this veiling of his divine glory in a human life, this participation in the nature of man and association with sinful men in their ordinary relations he stooped from the loftiest height to the very lowest depth. Without any approach to extravagance we may describe his condescension as infinite.

When this step is made we can scarcely wonder at any additional descent. And yet we are quite as much impressed with the next step as with the first. We can estimate the distance between one man and another better than we can that between the Creator and the creature. Our worldly perspective is too limited for any comparison of the human and the divine. But when Jesus says—*"I am among you as he that serveth"*—we can understand it because the objects of comparison are within the compass of our narrow vision. As a man he took a lowly place among his fellows. His parents were of the poorer class. His birth-place was a despised village. His companions were not princes but peasants and fishermen of Galilee. Among the twelve he was not ministered

unto but ministering. He was not above performing the most menial service when any good end might be accomplished thereby. He washed his disciples' feet and then said to them—"Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord and ye say well for so I am—I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you, Verily, verily I say unto you a servant is not greater than his lord; neither is one sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them."

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians (2:3-8) commends to us the Saviour's example of humility. He brings into view his whole course from the throne in glory to the cross on Calvary to stimulate us to the exercise of this essential grace. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be to you which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God but emptied himself taking the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross." May the Lord help us to yield ourselves to the transfiguring influence of his shining example, to take his yoke upon us and learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart. What is humility in man? It is the opposite of pride and vanity. It is a lowly view of one's self before God and among men. Our Saviour uttered a parable to teach the folly of pride and wherever his picture of the proud Pharisee has been seen it has fastened odium upon the name. He uttered another parable to teach the folly of vanity when he "Marked how they chose out the chief seats." Both parables he concludes with the same moral,—“For everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”



The same lesson is taught by precept and example both in the Old Testament and the New. Solomon tells us that "with the lowly is wisdom," and "before honor is humility." And Paul exhorts "every man that is among us not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." Humility means a just estimate of one's gifts and virtues. Says one—"Humility in man consists not in denying any gift that is in him but in a just valuation of it; rather thinking too meanly than too highly." There is a pride that undervalues one's gifts—a vanity that wears a veil of humility and sometimes the disguise is very ineffectual. We decline a service because we are unwilling to perform it except with eminent success. Is it modesty or subtle pride that prompts the refusal?

Dr. Thomas Brown of Edinburgh, in his discussion of this grace regards humility as a relative term, implying a comparison of some sort with an object higher or lower. If we compare ourselves with lower objects we are filled with pride; if with higher, we bend in humility. It is the glory of the Christian religion that it keeps our eye toward the heights of excellence, keeps our minds comparing ourselves with the noblest spirits of earth, with the perfect man of Nazareth and with the holy, just and true God.

And yet this beautiful view scarcely fills out the idea of humility as it appears in the scriptures. We are to be lowly among the lowest as well as the highest. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself." Even the clear-sighted Calvin raised the question—How can this be? We too may be puzzled to reconcile a just estimate with a superior estimate of every other, but whatever difficulty there may be in theory the truly humble heart solves it easily enough in practice. Paul was by his natural force a leader of men and could not be otherwise, yet he could say of himself—"I am less than the least of all saints—I am not meet to be called an apostle. I am the chief of sinners." These are not

empty words. They utter the profoundest thoughts of his heart when he was face to face with sin and with God.

John Howard was vexed with the proposal to erect a monument to his name and begged them to desist as he claimed no credit for his exertions in behalf of prisoners as he was merely riding his hobby horse. Said Sir Isaac Newton — "If I have seen farther than Descartes it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." There is fine courtesy as well as humility in this disclaimer, giving credit to his mighty predecessor into whose labors he had entered. Do we value this grace and seek it in its reality? It is of the very essence of Christian character. Augustine being asked the first step to heaven, answered, Humility; and the second, Humility; and the third? Humility. No other grace is perfect without it. So Peter after he had urged other graces, sobriety and prayerfulness and charity, says, "Be clothed with humility." Let this be a covering to hide them from our view — a covering to shield them from attack.

It is easier to preach about humility than to be humble. While we think about it and especially when we talk about it, it vanishes. As Dr. Cummings puts it — "The moment humility tells you, I am here, there is an end to it." It is so sensitive that we cannot even look on it without injuring it. We must be ever looking outward and upward, seeing by faith Him who is invisible and rejoicing in his love. If we walk humbly with God we will be able to live humbly among men.

II. The spirit of ministry in the life of Jesus. "He that serveth," — is his own designation of himself. And how well his whole life illustrates the truth of it. We purposely omit from consideration the sacrifice of himself on the cross. That was indeed the summit of his ministry to the race of men — the greatest service of all to mankind. He thereby lifted the curse of the broken law, broke the chains of the soul enslaved by sin, purchased liberty for the captives and the opening of the

prison to them that are bound. But all his dealings with men while he was on earth were in perfect harmony with this culminating fact of redemption. He was a servant of men, of all men whose lives he touched, especially of those who came into intimate relations with him in the social life.

1. He served in the ordinary sense of the word, as we use it in speaking of the household. He took the humblest place—he performed the most menial service. He rebuked the self-seeking of the disciples by his example and by his words. He told them that the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He taught them to be mutually helpful by performing kindly offices one for another. As the disciples were reclining on one occasion at the paschal supper a question arose about the usual custom of washing the disciples' feet. Who shall do this service seeing all are on the same social level? Jesus sets at rest any dispute that might have arisen by himself, their Lord and Master, assuming the servant's garb, removing the dust-covered sandals and washing their feet one by one and wiping them with the towel wherewith he was girded, the symbol of the inferior place he had taken. He thus teaches us that no work is in itself dishonorable and, when necessity requires it, no work is beneath the dignity of the highest. If we have the same spirit as he we cannot look with disdain on any life however lowly. On the contrary wherever the Christ spirit prevails disdain rebounds and brings contempt on the one who shows it rather than on its object.

Henry Ward Beecher, in his first charge in the West, from which he was called to Brooklyn, swept the floors and cleaned the lamps as well as preached the Gospel to the plain people. John Eliot, the Apostle of the Indians, stopped at nothing, enduring hardships, travelling by night and day, through wet and cold, accommodating himself to the life of the ignorant savage people he sought to save and when at 80 years he was obliged to desist

from arduous labors among the Indians he gathered the negro servants about him to teach them the word of God. If we go back a century farther we find George Buchanan, the great scholar, the tutor of Princess Mary and James of Scotland, similarly employed. Andrew Melville, coming in one day, found him teaching a serving lad the alphabet and expressed his wonder at finding him in so humble a work. "Better this," bluntly replied the distinguished man, "than stealing a sheep or sitting idle which is as ill."

It is not the work that dignifies or degrades the man but the man that dignifies or degrades the work.

2. Jesus was among men as one that served in the sense of *rendering help to others*. He made himself a blessing to all who came in contact with him.

How tenderly he looked after the bodily comfort of others! He went about doing good to those who had bodily diseases and infirmities. He found pleasure in ministering to health and happiness. How many little touches of the Gospel narratives show his delicacy and thoughtfulness. How liberally he provided against any embarrassment at the wedding feast at Cana! He comes to the house of the ruler of the synagogue whose little daughter, twelve years of age, lies asleep in death. The people are gathered there, and there is a great tumult — Jesus quietly takes the father and mother with his disciples into the inner sanctuary where the dead child lay. Every cold unsympathizing gazer is excluded and only they who loved her shall witness the act of Christ. And when the miracle is announced and a great astonishment seizes upon all and the restored child with her wants was in danger of being forgotten, it was Jesus who "Com-manded that something be given to eat." Just as when Lazarus was raised from the dead and stood bound hand and foot with grave-clothes it was Jesus who said unto them — "Loose him and let him go." Thus by his timely interposition here and there as he went as well as by his

mighty works that showed his divinity he was giving help where it was needed.

But his service to humanity was farther reaching than this. The body was for sake of the spirit — the instrument and revealer of the spirit. His main work was to teach the truth, to express and embody right ideals, to reach men's souls and do them good. His whole thought was how he might impart some spiritual good, how he might serve his fellow-men. He took advantage of every natural fact and every passing circumstance to find an entrance and a lodgment of the saving truth in the minds of men. The thought of service was in everything he did and said. Even the denunciations of the Pharisees and the penetrating words to Judas were only a last effort of love to reclaim them from their waywardness and sordidness.

How different is this attitude from that of the vast majority! So many act as if they might be saying — I am among you as he that is to be served. They are pressing for their rights, claiming precedence, cultivating friendships for selfish ends and discarding them when the ends are served, joining hands for the spoils sake and quarrelling over them when fully secured, striving to outshine in society and gloating over the discomfiture of a rival. It is a great triumph of culture and of grace when a generous thought pervades our lawful contests. It will be a grand advance of the world when self shall be subdued and love shall bind all together in one brotherhood, when the thought of each for every other shall be — How can I serve him best?

We are accustomed to say or to hear it said that the only solution of the labor problem is the prevalence of Christian principles in both employer and employee. And no doubt the problem will reach a vanishing point when all act upon the declaration of Christ — I am among you as he that serveth. The question will not be — How much can I get? but how much can I give? The hollow



eye-servant will be a fact of the past. The greedy capitalist will have passed away. Until this reign of mutual service has been fully entered upon there may be necessity for laws and regulations, for conferences and agreements. But there are instances of this happy state to be found here and there, streaks of the early morning that give promise and hope of the glorious dawn of that day the angels announced to the shepherds, of peace on earth and good-will among men. May the Lord hasten it in his time!

III. The new *conception of greatness* which Jesus has introduced. This whole discourse was called out by a dispute among the disciples who should be the greatest. By greatness they meant pre-eminence in place and power. But Jesus assures them that in His Kingdom another conception of greatness must prevail different from that which was cherished by Gentile thrones. There was indeed to be organization and order but no lordship over God's heritage — no despotic government since all the disciples are Kings and priests unto God. "But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger and he that is chief as he that doth serve." This is no isolated unsupported statement. The same sentiment is variously expressed and the same expressions are used on various occasions. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The only pre-eminence to be sought is that of service; let the only contention be who shall serve the most.

Here is something within reach of us all. Here is a spur to the ambition of the man or woman of the least talents or possessions. You or I may be great in service — great with the greatness of Christ. This is the greatness that will last — when thrones and crowns and monuments of marble or bronze and the emblazonry of history



and poetry have passed away. It makes its impress on a soul that never dies which in turn impresses other souls that never die. Marble will crumble, bronze will tarnish, other great names loom up to obscure the glories of the past but the soul of man is immortal and what is written there is carried forward into the eternity where all earthly glories are unknown.

This new conception of greatness is advancing in the world. Wherever the Gospel goes it must go with it. And although there is much that seems like the dominance of the old worldly spirit even in Christendom and even in the Church of Christ, I believe these are signs that the world is yielding to the power of Christ's truth and coming to consider all things in the light of service to humanity. Strength has its devotees. We all rise up before the man of giant strength. It sometimes seems as if the whole community were following the man who has an arm like a catapult or the shoulder of a Hercules. But it is not so. We pay the highest homage after all to the man and not the brute. We distinguish in the final judgment we render between Samson, the deliverer, and Sullivan, the bruiser. When the Presbyterian Alliance met in Toronto seven years ago, there was an excursion to Niagara and many of the visitors and their friends took part in it. A woman of one of the companies fell through one of the bridges across the Niagara River above the Falls and caught upon one of the girders and would soon have fallen farther into the rapid stream below. Dr. Ramsey, a Scotch delegate, quickly sprang down and reached her in time to save her from falling further. It was a skilful, heroic act that called out the applause of all and was recognized by a public introduction to the Assembly next day. Perhaps in the athletics of the university he developed that strong arm and that promptness of action, but it was a brave heart and the spirit of service that added nobleness to strength. Men shudder at the act of foolhardiness of a Blondin and

glory in an act of heroism like this. Wealth in the eyes of many is greatness. It certainly means power and influence and great opportunity. And yet apart from high qualities of character do men highly esteem it in others? Do we look upon a Cræsus or a Rothschild with more of admiration than upon the impersonal Bank of England? But when Baron Hirsch, with love for the impoverished, oppressed Jews of Russia, spends millions for their rescue we praise him with one acclaim. When Jay Gould, scarcely purged from the charge of wrecking other men's fortunes, died leaving many millions behind him the world gave a half hearted praise to his achievement but when Helen Gould shows the spirit of sympathy with the nation and with the suffering a nation rises up and calls her blessed.

It is come to this, that men of wealth are expected to consider the responsibility of wealth — are placed upon their honor with reference to its use in the service of humanity. What a splendid chance does the possession of large means give! The very highest human greatness is within the grasp of the millionaire if he only enters into the spirit of Jesus which enables him to say, I am among you as he that serveth. Military and naval prowess have filled the eye of the world of late. At mention of the names of our heroes men go wild and loud huzzas fill the air. All honor to them! and yet is not the cause that inspired them with courage as well as the courage itself in our minds when we make the welkin ring with our tumultuous cheers. When a few years have passed — about a generation — Grant still looms up as the most illustrious general of the Civil War. But when we remember him, probably the first thought of him will be his generosity to a defeated foe and his famous sentence — Let us have peace! Not Julius Cæsar or Alexander the Great or Napoleon — men who scourged the world but Cromwell and Washington and Lincoln — men who blessed the world as leaders in the cause of

liberty are in the thoughts of men today. Who knows the names of the military leaders on either side in the Crimean War and yet who has not heard the name of Florence Nightingale, the ministering angel of its mangled hosts and how many have read of Hedly Vicars and Arthur Vandcleur who stood as bravely for Christ as for the cause of the Allies.

What makes a nation great? The same as makes a man or woman — mighty service. Wordsworth sang of old England — his country. "For dearly must we prize thee; we who find in thee a bulwark for the cause of man." To our land has been given a like distinction or even a greater — to be not only a bulwark but a champion of the cause of men. May she never forget to keep this as the pole-star of her destiny — an example of the nations — a magnificent embodiment of the spirit of Christ who came to serve and to save. Has it not come to this in this world of ours, where already the regnant forces are Christian, that the Christian conception of greatness has such sway as to make all other ideals subservient to it and every hero in art or literature, in war or peace, in finance or statesmanship must justify his title to greatness by the service he renders to mankind.

Members of the class of 1899 let me commend to you the example we have been considering. What is to be your future calling is a very important question you are asking yourselves just now. Let me tell you it is not nearly so important as this — In what spirit shall I pursue the calling I choose? It is possible to enter the sacred office of the Gospel ministry with only selfish ends in view. It is possible to give selfless service to Christ and to men in any honorable secular calling. My young friends, whatever inferior ends you may hope to secure make your lives sublime by the larger purpose and hope of achieving something for the good of the world while you are in it.

Neither let it be a thing in the distance. Begin at once, if you have not already begun, to brighten the lives of

those that are nearest to you. Despise not the little things that contribute so much to happiness and character. Speak a kind word and never a bitter, taunting, sneering, disdainful one, speak a faithful word if it be needed but in a loving, tender spirit, give a cup of cold water to the thirsty, pick a stumbling block out of your neighbor's way, cast a covering over his feet, "Lift up the hands that hang down and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be not turned out of the way but rather let it be healed."

However it be it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good;  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

As a lover of men join the forces in the world that are in favor of human well-being. Be a friend and loyal supporter of the Church of Jesus Christ which is his own agency for the advancement of human welfare. Be known as a friend of temperance and liberty and righteousness and law — pillars of the republic — staunch girders of the ship of state on whose safe riding of the sea rests the great hope of humanity. In this time when all things are concentrating — when combinations rule in the business and social world — when as Tennyson puts it, "The individual withers and the world is more and more," you cannot accomplish all that is possible for you if you stand aloof from the movements and organizations that embody the philanthropic spirit of the times. Be a man — never lose your individuality; but be a man among men, co-operating without petty fault-finding, with heartiness of soul in all that promises well for humanity, in carrying out the program of Christianity long ago announced by Isaiah — "To bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the accept-

able year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Young men and women, you are getting pictures of your friends as you are about to leave them, and after awhile you will hang them up to remind you of one another and the happy days gone by. I have sought this afternoon to hang a picture within the chambers of your minds — a picture of Immanuel God with us — of the Man of Galilee stooping down to bless others — a picture with this inscription below — "I am among you as he that serveth." Keep the picture ever before you and keep the inscription clear and you will be happy in making others happy. Blessing will respond to blessing. Love will beget love. Conscience will approve. The Father will smile down from above and through the gateway of life's close there will open before you vistas of brightness and joy such as earth cannot give.

And so make life, death and the vast forever,  
One grand sweet song.

## SERMON XV, 1900

### DECISION VS. DRIFTING

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.—Hebrews 2: 1.*

**I**N a sheltered place a little vessel rests upon the waters of the lake. It is not tied to the shore by any chain of iron, nor anchored in its place by any grappling hook beneath. But it lies securely enough upon the placid surface and there is no fear of damage. The shore is within sight and the mighty deep is far away. Why waste anxiety upon the unfettered, unsuspecting craft? Let it enjoy its freedom and dance as it may with the swaying waves.

But there may be currents beneath that bear it along. The swell of the great ship passing by may draw it away from its place of security. The rough winds may drive it out toward the danger line. By advances made insensibly, by constant current or sudden shock, by wind and wave imparting motion however slight, it glides out to sea. And now it becomes the sport of the elements. The heat of the summer's sun and the breath of the North wind test its timbers. From all quarters the winds play upon it and drive it hither and thither; the storm attacks it and dashes it against its fellow or upon the rocks. Who can predict its destiny as it floats upon the waters, with no control, the veriest plaything of every breeze and eddy. It drifts and drifts and drifts and none can tell where.

Something like this is in the writer's mind when he uses the figure contained in our text. "The things that were heard"—the precious things of the Gospel—stretch like



a beautiful shore line of truth before our minds. They are as abiding as the bounds of the sea and the salvation of the soul is assured by keeping near to them. The things we have heard come from God. Even when they come through prophets and apostles behind them was the authoritative voice of the Lord. But in these last days the Lord himself hath spoken by the voice of his Son. Out of the opened heavens the Father has certified him to us with the clear announcement and command — "This is my Beloved Son; hear him." In the preceding chapter we have the wonderful attributes and glories of the son of God set forth — his power and dominion and righteousness and changelessness — his superiority to every creature, the highest angels being subservient to him, his ministers that do his pleasure. It is He who speaks to us and "therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard lest haply we drift away from them," or as John Owen translates it — "lest at any time we flow away from them."

The subject suggested might be stated as — Decision vs. Drifting. There is the possibility of a great loss by drifting away and there is a contrary possibility of providing against it by taking earnest heed. It is not rescue that is urged, but protection. We are to take heed *lest we fall* — to prevent disaster rather than repair it. However inspiring the work of rescue it is not so wise or so hopeful as that of prevention. Love no doubt bids us lift up the fallen but it calls with louder voice to us to shield the upright. It pleads with ourselves to abide in a safe harbor and take no risks on life's treacherous sea.

I. The evil to be avoided is *drifting away from Christ* and the Gospel.

It is assumed that it is a very undesirable thing for any soul to pass out from under the influence of Christian truth. This is the view not only of the writer but of those to whom his words are addressed. And I doubt not it is the view of you to whom I speak to-night. You

believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ his own Son and our Saviour. You believe in the Bible as the word of God and in the Christian Church as the great agency of God for the betterment of mankind. You believe in worship as due from every rational creature to the Creator and in service as due from every blood-bought sinner to his Redeemer. You affirm your belief in these things and express your hope that you may never believe them less nor fail to square your lives in accordance with them. You would not turn your back upon Christianity any more than you would upon the mother that has borne you and borne with you until now. No matricidal hand of yours will ever stab this cherishing mother of all that is good in our civilization. You are ready to ask with Hazael when confronted with his own future cruelties, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

But there are more ways than one of wounding and destroying those we love. He who would not lift a hand except to bless his mother may break her loving heart by waywardness and neglect. He who would not, could not bitterly assail the religion of Jesus, may become indifferent to its claims.

Drifting is very often an *unconscious* process. Little by little the change takes place and we are far from our moorings ere we are aware of it. It creeps upon one as age comes upon the grown man. In the significant figure of Hosea this spiritual and moral deterioration is set forth—"Gray hairs are here and there upon him and he knoweth it not." In many a case if the drift were clearly seen it would be arrested. But hidden from the sight it works its full damage unchecked. You sit by the open window when the chill of the evening begins to come on and imperceptibly you are affected by the draft. So do chilling winds blow upon the soul out of the social atmosphere of the world and the injury is received before they are noticed.

Drifting further implies *passivity*. The soul yields to whatever influences play upon it. It is not actively, vigorously marking out its course and destiny but languidly consenting to the control of others. There is blind surrender to the forces that are about it. It is "carried about by every wind of doctrine" or drawn away by every wave of practice. Nothing can be more pitiable than such subserviency to environment — such effacement of individuality. What a miserable thing is a piece of driftwood! It initiates nothing; it contends for nothing; it yields to all things. Yet such is man when he basely abandons his divinely given right of self-control and both intellectually and morally "faces nowhere in particular."

It is, however, of drifting away from Christ that our verse speaks.

It may be *intellectual* — drifting from the faith — from the truth as it is in Jesus.

Sceptical notions are not so much a conclusion definitely reached as a condition into which men have settled unthinkingly — a residuum precipitated from their surroundings, their reading or companionship or practices.

How much of it springs out of *current literature*! It may be in the form of a novel in which the orthodox minister is made a narrow repulsive character and the heretic is clothed with all the graces of a noble life. It may be a periodical that in every issue finds something for criticism in the principles, measures and men that stand by the faith of the fathers. It may be a lecturer who wins the applause of the crowd by his attack on creeds and confessions. It may be that no single instance produces any marked effect. But a continual dropping wears away the stone — an impact of sceptical thoughts produces a total effect that was never anticipated at the first. Men do not stop to answer insinuations and criticisms and therefore the impression remains and contributes to the views that are ultimately held. I know it is true that Christ was never more in literature than now —

that Wordsworth and Browning and Tennyson are saturated with Christian thought. But it is also true that there are counter-currents of infidelity and that there are volumes that flaunt the name of Christian that in their influence as a whole are unfriendly to the Divine Christ. Be on the watch as you read lest you drift away from the truth. Keep near you some antidote to the poison you will find in many a beautiful flower. "Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men: be strong."

The drift from Christ may be *practical* or experimental — from the *life* rather than from the faith of the Christian. Each, however, is likely to produce the other. Wrong beliefs work themselves out in wrong practices; wrong practices blind the eyes to right beliefs. The same influences contribute to both.

Here let me illustrate by *companionship*. We hear much in our day of occult communication of mind with mind. We may be slow to believe all that we hear men tell. But who can doubt that there are silent influences of one upon another as we meet? We can scarcely touch elbows with a stranger on the car and be afterward exactly the same. But when you add to presence, acquaintance and friendship and fellowship, the power of a strong personality, of expressed thought, of asserted will, who can estimate the power of one person over another? Then add to all this the power of the crowd for men rarely rise superior to its dictates whether the crowd be made up of many or few. Is it any wonder that men are borne down by these influences that come from others — that they are borne along like the fragments of rock in the bosom of the moving glacier.

Possibly some of you have felt the power of which I speak in your college life. You have drifted away from Christ through Christless companionship. Perhaps you have not so much opposed as *suppressed* Christ in your lives. Something will be gained if you recognize the fact

and whether here or elsewhere issue orders upon yourself to discontinue the perilous process. Still more will be gained if you realize your impotence and cry to God — "Heal thou our backsliding and love us freely."

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Heb. 15:9.

II. The Shield against the evil of drifting away from the Gospel. "We ought to take the more earnest heed to things we have heard."

We will not, however guarded, escape the attack. We will be obliged to resist the forces that operate against our faith. The world will still be round about us and work as insidiously as ever. But the trap will be set in vain for the watchful soul. The boat that is anchored to the shore may be jostled and swayed, but none the less it is held in its place; it feels the current that pulls this way or that, but it never goes beyond the length of its chain. So the soul that gives earnest heed to the things of Christ will never, however pressed, be drawn away from them. What do we mean by this? What is earnest heed?

It means first of all, *attention* — the intent applying of the mind to the matter in hand.

Denial of the things of the Gospel very commonly arises from lack of consideration. Dr. Johnson said of Foote, the comedian, "That if he were an infidel he was an infidel as a dog is — that he never had a thought on the subject." And there are other cases of the same silly sort. On the other hand conviction is wrought in a man by diligent thought. Attention is an act of the will and may exist in various degrees. When we lay distinct emphasis upon it we mean it in a high degree. Ex-President Harrison in a recent talk on education said this: "From a mental standpoint there are in truth only two great classes among men — the men who give attention and the men who do not." Christian truth will be a thing of surpassing worth to us only when we give resolute, thorough



attention to it. Let a whole mind be given to it and the heart will be likely to follow.

The church economy has provided aids to reflection on the things of Christ. We have in our hands a collection of inspired writings—an infallible record of the revelation of God. We have the services of the sanctuary in which the truth is uttered by the living voice so as to engage the heart of man. We have memorials of Christian facts making constant appeal to our perceptions and emotions. Are you using these aids to attention? Alas! they may be used without attention—in formal, listless way. Their end may be thwarted and even reversed so that instead of fixing the mind they only lull it to sleep. Are you not only attending but attent to the word of God and his worship? Hold your mind to the things of Christ until they make their imprint upon it.

Taking earnest heed means *enthusiasm* for the truth. It is an application of the heart as well as the mind to it. Nothing engages attention to any matter like interest in it—earnest devotion to it. Why does the man of science pursue with unwearying diligence an elusive fact? Because he is in love with science. Why does the artist linger amid the works of great masters? Because he is wedded to his art. Why did John Howard dismiss from his consideration the beauties of nature and art and give unremitting attention to his high calling of philanthropy? Because of his absorbing love for mankind. Something akin to all these must possess him who will fulfil the injunction contained in the words we are considering. Says one: "We do not win our strength and stability by mastering ideas, but by being mastered by them—held in their grip." Paul was mastered by the Gospel when he said, "For me to live is Christ."—"I am set for the defense of the Gospel of Christ." There is a vast difference between a mere perception of a truth and possession by it. One may say, "I believe in God," and another lives as in his presence. One says, "I believe in a future



life," and another lives and breathes and walks and talks under the power of the world to come. One says, "I accept the evidence of the love of God," and another has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. Into this deeper experience of divine truth let us all strive to enter. There is no shield against unbelief like genuine Christian experience — like the life of God in the soul from center to circumference.

I fear we sometimes feel that the *things we hear* are scarcely real. We contrast faith with fact. I lately asked a medical student if the tendency of study in medical schools was unfriendly to faith in the Bible or Christ. He replied, "In them we deal only with facts and leave out of view the realm of fancy and faith." It seemed like an unconscious confession of the very thing I feared.

But we all need to re-assure ourselves of the certainty — the reality of the things of Christ. The soul is a sublimer, surer fact than the body. I am more certain of a percipient and a perception than of the object perceived. Faith is no fancy and they must not be classified together. Faith takes hold on realities. Fellowship with God is as real as fellowship with men. Jesus Christ is no phantom, but the most magnificent fact in the universe. Let us dwell upon these verities until they take possession of us. If you have drifted into indifference, will you not bestir yourselves into enthusiasm. Fall in love anew with Jesus and his cause and devote yourself to his name and kingdom.

Taking earnest heed means *obedience*. We say to the child, "Do you hear?" and "Will you heed?" To heed means more than to listen; it includes regard to the direction, caution or command. When Saul of Tarsus heard the voice of the risen Lord who appeared to him on the way to Damascus, he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," but at once made a full surrender to his newly found Lord, and raised the question, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" From that day onward he

had no will but that of Jesus — no policy but that of unswerving obedience.

Said a French nobleman, "Every man goes down to Damascus once in his life." A glorious form flits across his vision, a voice, a summons is heard, the summons enters into his inmost soul and awakens every element of his being into an unwonted activity. What will be the result? Decision will be made on the way to Damascus and it will be either obedience or disobedience — everlasting loss or gain — heaven or hell. How has it been with you? Jesus of Nazareth has passed by and you have had some glimpses of his glory. The Holy Spirit has exalted the Lord before your eyes and you have been attracted by his beauty and love. But what is the issue of it all? Has your heart been won and are you wedded to him in the bonds of a perpetual covenant? Let such a decision be made and you cast a sure anchor against drifting away. You will follow on to know the Lord in ways of obedience to his requirements. And as you go your assurance will increase and you will be able to say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Members of the class of 1900, I have announced my theme in an alliterative way in the hope that I might fasten it better in your memory — "as a nail in a sure place."

*Decision vs. Drifting.* I have but one aim in view — to move each of you, if I may, to an unalterable decision in regard to matters that concern your highest welfare.

Ours is a time of unrest in the religious world, when the bonds of many are loosed. Men are saying bitter, even blasphemous things of revered symbols of faith. It is the age of the keen, sharp critic rather than the strong, heroic believer. One may take almost any position and find himself not without company.

I do not urge you to a blind belief, to accept without consideration every tradition of the fathers. It is to be remembered, however, that the old is not probably false, nor the new certainly true. But may I not urge you to think in some conclusive way about these things—to settle questions upon the answer to which so much depends. Make up your mind in such fashion as will not be moved by the bluff of pretentious scholarship or by the gush and slush of sentimentalism or by the invasion of pleasure-seeking, money-loving worldliness. *Cast anchor* at the cross of Christ and the word of God and the life of godliness.

As soon as you take up your abode in any place, find in it a spiritual home. Join yourself to some body of Christian people, wait regularly upon the church services, show an interest in its activities, keep God's Sabbaths and reverence his sanctuary. Take your stand decidedly and at once upon the side of Christ. Will you do it? Decision is yours and yours only. It is an act of will and none can perform it for you. I plead with you to be a Christian in faith and in practice, unweakened by frivolous doubt, unblighted by a single cherished sin. Abide by the *things you have heard* in the old home church, in your father's house, from your mother's lips—the same that you have heard during your stay with us. I plead for Christian decision as against drifting because it will put meaning into your life, iron into your blood, strength in your character. By reason of it you will be a nobler, sweeter woman, a manlier man. What is more important than all, it will secure your soul's salvation. How near eternity seems to us these last weeks as we hear of one and another crossing over! Life is a thread easily broken; the margin between the present and future is narrow and we may stumble across it. It becomes us therefore to provide against an eternal failure by anchorage at the foot of the cross of Christ—by acceptance of the great salvation.

Let me return in ending to the figure at the beginning. Out of this port you are just about to sail. You launch out on the great sea of life, gayly bedecked, streamers floating, hopes high. I wish you all a happy, prosperous voyage, fulfilling the poet's words about a noble soul — compared to a ship at sea :

He cuts his way with skill and majesty.

You will touch at many points as you go and finally enter port again on the other side — and where? Are you at the helm or drifting? That will determine your destiny.

Christian, God speed thee,  
Let loose the rudder bands,  
Good angels lead thee,  
Set thy sails warily,  
Tempests will come.  
Steer thy course steadily,  
Christian, steer home.

## SERMON XVI, 1901

### THE FINAL TEST OF HEROISM

*And having done all to stand.—Eph. 6: 13.*

WE speak of the battle of life. And however trite the comparison we keep on using it because of its perennial suggestiveness. It has ever fresh illustration in our personal experience.

Even to live requires a perpetual struggle. It sometimes seems as if nature were conspiring against the life of man. The beasts of the field thirst for his blood and must be subdued under him. There is poison lurking in the green and beautiful leaf and man must learn to distinguish between the harmful and the wholesome. Even the atmosphere is sometimes laden with death so that he needs protection against its insidious attack. Even in himself there is a deathward tendency, a waste that must be repaired by appropriating the products of nature and pressing its forces into his service. But if the struggle to live is great, the struggle to live well is greater. The moral warfare is more strenuous and unceasing than the material. It is ever on and on with us all, however favorable our surroundings. There are enemies within and enemies without, seen and unseen, open and disguised. To maintain in the face of them all a pure and undaunted spirit, an upright life, a right relation to the issues of the land and the time, in every way a conscience void of offense toward God and man — this is to be a victor indeed. But such a triumph will not be won without a hard fight and a strong Helper.

The passage from which our text is taken is a sort of

battle-cry. The little band of three hundred men blew their trumpets and threw the Midianites into fearful panic with the battle cry—"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." At the battle of Naseby the soldiers of Cromwell overwhelmed Rupert and his cavaliers with the cry upon their lips as they advanced—"God is with us! God is with us!" So does Paul urge on the Christian soldier in this passage to valiant deeds. And we may urge one another to the conflict and to readiness for it with the ringing words he gives us—"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand."

It is difficult to give an idea of a battle on canvas. Yet frequent attempts have been made by artists to paint the pivotal battles of great wars. Rothermel has sought to give us some impression of the Battle of Gettysburg. But they are disappointing because only an instantaneous view of a battle can be given, while in the real world the scene is ever changing. Something like this we seem to have in the words we have chosen as our text. There has been a preliminary skirmish as the Christian has met the enemy and withstood him in the evil day. There is a lull in the strife and the enemy, though foiled, is not destroyed. At that critical instant Paul paints the scene as it should be—as it must be, if the vantage ground is to be maintained. It is, as it were, a snap-shot in the on-going battle of life. Let us look for a little at this instantaneous picture, this exhortation for a moment of supreme importance—"And having done all *to stand!*"



It presents for our consideration the *final, supreme duty of the Christian soldier*.

What is it? To *stand* — to maintain the ground he has won — to hold on till the end of the combat. Thrice in this entire passage is the same word employed. In the eleventh verse we have, "That ye may be able to *stand* against the wiles of the devil," and in the verse following our text the order is repeated — "Stand, therefore." It seems to express the great thought of the apostle's mind, the highest aim of the believer's life. Let him put on God's armor, not to glory in its gilded trappings for it is invisible, not to possess it as a precious thing or heirloom, but to wear it in the actual conflict. If there is a sharp attack let him withstand the assailant with the skill and vigor of one who is well-armed and strong. And then, however decisive may seem his victory, let him hold the field with unrelaxing vigilance. It will not do to stop to celebrate the victory or to be off guard for a single moment. "Having done all," — all that can be done in the way of preparation or of actual engagement, let him stand firm.

There is a subtle danger that comes to us in the hour of success, even in the hour of moral and spiritual triumph. And strange as it may seem it is more likely to come in regard to those traits of character in which we suppose ourselves to be well established. Abraham was pre-eminently the man of faith and more than once his faith was signally displayed. Yet even he, the father of the faithful, failed at this very point when he thought of his beautiful wife and prevaricated for her sake instead of trusting God. Elijah is the hero of the Old Testament — the man of courage. As we read the story of his defiance of Ahab, the King, and his challenge to the multitude of Baal's prophets we admire him. But just after the triumphant vindication of Jehovah on Mt. Carmel, when we might have expected to find him elated and strong in God, he is seen sitting down under a

juniper-tree, dispirited and lone, a pitiable creature wishing that he might die. So may it be with you or me. You may win the day when some temptation assails you. You escape the snare that is laid for your feet. It may have been a strong provocation to ill-temper, or irreverence, or to discouragement or to grosser forms of evil. But by your own will and God's gracious help you have overcome. Thank God for that! nevertheless, be on your guard lest through carelessness or pride you prepare for yourself a fall. "Be not high-minded but fear." It is for you "having done all to stand"—to be alert at the very place where you have just achieved something worthy.

I. This duty to stand may pertain to *personal character*. As in Bunyan's "Holy War," the contention maybe for possession of the city of man-soul. The Kingdom of God is within us. It is the business of the Christian to resist the enemies of his own soul, to keep his heart with all diligence, to control his thoughts, affections and purposes and subject them to the will of God—to abide with God in purity and righteousness and virtue. Having chosen the way of obedience let him not be jostled from it by the world, the flesh and the devil. "Beware," says Peter, "lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." And Paul exhorts—"Be ye steadfast, unmoveable." Sometimes men speak lightly of *habits* of virtue as if it detracted somewhat from an act to flow from a habit. But what is a habit but a permanent tendency? and is an act any less virtuous because it issues from an everflowing fountain of good? What is heaven but a place where the inhabitants habitually and spontaneously do the will of God—like the "angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments hearkening to the voice of his word?" True there are external habits that hold only to the rule. But there are also internal habits, principles that reign within, laws written on the heart by the spirit of God.

The psalmist tells about them in the 119th Psalm. In how many ways he voices the sentiment of a soul that is firmly wedded to the truth, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day"—we sing with much fleshly fervor. Do we also realize its deep spiritual meaning? Does it give voice to the profound emotions of our own hearts? If so we cannot lightly set aside any one of the divine precepts. We cherish the spirit that will stand steadfast and unmoveable in all the will of God.

After a certain victory a staff officer said to Lord Hardinge—"Havelock, my lord, is every inch a soldier." He received this reply—"Yes, Havelock is every inch a soldier; but he is more and he is better; he is every inch a Christian." He stood out amid the unfavorable surroundings of army life a conspicuous example of fidelity to Christ and to duty. Admiral John W. Philip was not only a valiant commander during the naval battle of Santiago but brave enough to call his men together when the battle ceased to acknowledge God in the issue. He stood equally well for the flag of his country and the banner of Christ.

Some of you are disposed to think that it is difficult to live out the Christian life in college. It is true that the life here has its peculiarities that mark it off from life elsewhere. Stress is laid upon the intellectual side of men and women by educational pursuits and they may so engross the attention as to exclude the spiritual. Then there is the tyranny of associations, the sway of the mass, the leadership of the noisy rather than the wise—that make it hard to stand for Christ and what is right. And yet these conditions are to be found everywhere and the real battle with them is after all within. If we are living at a distance from God, it is hard to be a Christian anywhere. And if we are living in perpetual touch with the source of spiritual power it is easy to be true to Christ anywhere. James A. Garfield, when a student at Williams College, went with a company of students up

into the mountain top not far away and as they stood on one of the highest peaks, awed by the grandeur of the scene, young Garfield broke the silence by saying — "Boys, it is a habit of mine to read a chapter in the Bible every evening with my absent Mother. Shall I read aloud?" And he read and they prayed together at eventide on the mountain top. He *stood* for the religion of his Mother and his own. Alas, there are others who are so cowed by companions and surroundings that they are afraid to own that they have a Mother that prays. Shame on the young man or woman who can cast a slur on the word or worship of the living God, or in cowardly fear disown the God of his father and mother. Young people, stand for what you believe in your heart of hearts. Stand for what is clean and pure and honest and Christ-like. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; stable as the rock thou shalt hold on thy way with increasing excellence. Hold fast what you have attained and you keep a base for further conquest. Faith will rise to higher faith; love will beget more love. Every grace that you cherish will ripen toward perfection and the battle for personal character will be crowned with eminent success.

II. This duty may pertain to the kingdom of God in the world, to the war of ideas and principles — to the conflict between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, Christ and Satan. The line is clearly drawn; the forces are arranged on one side or the other. Sometimes in the dust and smoke of the battle we may not be able to distinguish friend from foe. But when the heart is right the soldier of the cross sooner or later finds his true place. Neutrality, as our membership covenant affirms, is detestable, if indeed it be possible. Vacillation is weakness and in the place of responsibility may be wickedness. Pilate with his judicial authority might have set Jesus free. But he wavered and soon was over-awed by the clamor of a mob. He comes down in history with the contempt of mankind though he had the chance to win golden

opinions by following firmly his own convictions. He left an indelible stain upon his name because he did not stand by the truth as he saw it. Is it possible to be neutral when in a great cause the issue is squarely drawn? Whether neutrality arises from indifference or cowardice it weighs on the side of triumphant wickedness.

Oh! there are moments when such  
As will not help to lift us, strike us down!

Neutrality is Hate; the aid withheld,  
Flings its large balance in the adverse scale;  
And makes the enemy we might have quelled,  
Strong to attack, and certain to prevail,  
Yea, clothes him scoffing in a suit of mail.

As Jesus himself puts it —“ He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

What is *your* attitude toward the Kingdom of God? May you be counted first and last without question on the side of Christ? Hesitating, fitful, changeful allegiance is not worthy of the name. Can you *stand* for God and truth and right? Are you loyal to the old Book as the very word of God, from whose decisions there is no appeal? Are you among the sworn friends of the Sabbath, and may you be depended upon when the day of battle comes? Are you set against every licensed or unlicensed hell on earth, whether it be saloon or brothel or gambling den? Are you opposed to every form of slavery however disguised or gilded may be the chains it forges?

What, my young friends, is your ideal for the future? What do you mean to do for the generation in which you will live? Of one thing I am sure that the great need of this generation is men that can stand fast in their personal integrity and in their devotion to principle. In



almost every line of business or professional activity there is pressure to be resisted. In some spheres of life — the political for example — the pressure is well-nigh irresistible. The wonder is not that many fall but that any stand against it. Yes, we need brave men for the times we live in; men like Edwin M. Stanton, the great war secretary, of whom one wrote — “Who, in leaning on this man, ever found him a broken reed? He never despaired of the Republic. In the darkest days, though he was oft times full of sorrow and sometimes full of agony, yet his steady nerve never trembled; his stout heart never played the coward”; men like Benjamin Harrison, who was too great a statesman to be a good politician, too strong in his sense of duty as President to be swayed by venial motives, held in higher esteem when he became a mere citizen of the Republic than during his term of office, admirable for his qualities of mind but more admirable for his poise of soul and his high purpose, a man of God as well as of the people, a leader in the Church and the nation, a fit presiding officer of a Missionary Council — he served his generation well by the will of God and has fallen asleep; men who in less conspicuous spheres can be true to themselves, their country and their God.

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,  
Men who possess opinions and a will  
Men who have honor, men who will not lie.

We have a great host who can hurrah. We have not a few who can act well on an occasion or in a crisis, who can advance in face of shot and shell, who can storm a castle or plant the flag across the seas. But the final test of heroism is to hold the post of danger with quiet determination, to stand calmly to duty though unsupported by others, to bear the brunt of a moral conflict in the days of its weakness, to stand alone with God if need be. This calm moral fight may be waged on any field.



Dream not helm and harness,  
The sign of valor true,  
Peace hath higher tests of manhood  
Than battle ever knew.

They will come to every one of you whatever be your sphere of life — to you, young women, as well as to young men. You will have the chance of heroism and I may say more, you will have the spirit of it, too. It belongs to woman to endure, to make sacrifices, to hold fast to whatever wins her heart. If her history tells not of camp and march and bloody strife, it tells of waiting and watching and hardship and tender ministry and brave counsel. Recently, in China, women, as well as men, braved the ferocious mob in hope of shielding God's little ones won to Christ from heathenism by their efforts. I trust that none of you may be thus exposed. But I know you will not escape the moral test, the temptation to be silent when truth is on the scaffold, to be pliant when wrong is on the throne, the temptation to follow the ways of an ungodly world, the temptation to compromise with Satan rather than withstand him. You can only hope to do good in the world as a Christian by standing to your colors — by exalting everywhere Christ and his cause. Do you now ask me — "*How* shall I be able to stand? How shall I do this either as a personal or public duty? It is well for me to be forewarned but only if I may be forearmed.

You have sometimes seen a pole that is exposed to the pressure of strong winds held in its erect position by wire supports. You have seen a plant or young tree tied to a post sunk in the ground to keep it from a crooked growth. Are there any ties by which we may be held to an upright life? Are there any firm pillars to which we may attach ourselves and be strong? The Church of Jesus Christ may be a "pillar and ground of the truth" for all who love it and work in it and for it. The companion-

ship of the choicest spirits we can find may hold us to the right line of truth and duty, may even draw us back from downward tendencies to which we are prone. So my first answer to your inquiry is — Train with upright men and you will grow upright. Keep fellowship with the friends of Christ in the services and work of his Church and you will be a friend of Christ yourself.

But I have another answer that comes out of the contest. In order to stand you must have *strength*. After a few years have passed the young tree that was coupled to a post ceases to need the latter's support. The winds may play upon it from every side but it swings ever back to its perpendicular position. Instead of doing it any harm they only assist its more perfect development. What is the difference between then and now? It has gathered strength with the years and therefore is able to stand alone. Our first need is strength and where shall we get it? Paul's answer is — "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." In another epistle, he says, — "By faith ye stand" — faith in God and in Jesus. Speaking of his own experience, he says, — "When I am weak then am I strong," and the reason of it is that the "power of Christ rests upon him" and finding strong assurance in his past experience he says — "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

This source of strength is open to you and me. It can be had if we only believe. The reason why any of us have so little strength is because we have so little faith. The heroes of the ages have been heroes of faith. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Stephen could resist the enemies of the Gospel and bear to be stoned to death because he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. It was faith that enabled Luther to say before the Diet at Worms — "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God." It was faith that made Gordon the most heroic man of the last century. And we will be truly brave and strong just in proportion as we walk

before the Lord, as we live in the Lord by faith. Let us cleave unto Jesus with a faith that is living, that will vitalize and energize all that is good in us. Let us pray —“Lord, increase our faith!” Thus furnished with strength the Knight of the Cross puts on the armor of God and enters on his life-long combat. The armor is both offensive and defensive, visible and invisible. Faith is itself one piece of this invisible, unpenetrable coat of mail. When every part of it is on it covers the head and the breast and every vital part. The shield can be turned to one side or another according to the point of attack. The sword hangs by his side and it is a keen blade piercing to the thoughts and intents of the heart, laying bare the subtleties of Satan’s wiles and devices. We cannot speak of this armor at length and in detail. But I bid you notice that it is the armor of God — prescribed, supplied by God. For this reason you may have unbounded confidence in it. It will not disappoint you in the day of trial. You know also where to apply for it. It is furnished by God and He gives it for the asking, “Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance.”

## SERMON XVII, 1902

### FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

*Follow thou me.—John 21: 22.*

THE first impression we are likely to receive from the story of Peter is that he is very human. He is so like ourselves, so forward and bustling in his action, so independent of his fellows, so impetuous and outspoken, so impressible and immediate in his conclusions, so prone to err in judgment and in speech, yet withal so frank and manly and companionable that we feel that he is one of us, of our kith and kin, of like passions and infirmities with ourselves.

A second impression of the story swiftly follows. It gives us a vivid exhibition of the amazing love and grace of Jesus. It reminds us of Pope's line —

To err is human; to forgive divine.

Recall a few of the incidents of Peter's life that illustrate both the frailty of Peter and the Master's tenderness. When Jesus foretold to his disciples his death at Jerusalem, Peter could not bear the thought of such a cruel and untimely end to the career of his beloved. His unwise affection and zeal led him to rebuke his Lord saying — "Be it far from thee Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Jesus in turn rebukes him severely and instructs him concerning the conditions of discipleship and a few days afterward takes him up into the mount of transfiguration and shows him his glory and permits him to hear the heavenly visitants,—Moses and Elias—speaking of his decease

which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. He softens his rebuke by bringing him closer to himself and unveiling to him more fully the secrets of his kingdom.

You remember the shameful conduct of Peter which we usually refer to as his denial of his Master. It was an aggravated succession of sinful acts, involving him in the guilt of breaking solemn vows and of falsely and profanely disowning his Lord. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. One look from his grieved Master brought him to his senses and led to his recovery. Pricked to the heart by that loving, piercing gaze, he "went out and wept bitterly." And when the crucifixion was past and the days of his humiliation were brought to an end by his resurrection from the dead Jesus sends a special message to Peter for his encouragement by the women who were early at the sepulchre—"Go your way, tell his disciples *and Peter*." Jesus knew how the arrow would stick in him and draws it out with a particular message of love. "And Peter"—singles him out from the rest and summons him to the meeting with the disciples in Galilee. And now in this chapter we have an account of a searching and gracious interview of Jesus with his erring disciple. The probe may seem severe but it is the condition of returning health. It brings his love to Christ into conscious exercise and prepares the way for his complete re-instatement in his place of honor and service to the Church. It is the loving-kindness of the Lord that shines out in his history from beginning to end. Love heals his backsliding, silences his fears and doubts, draws him back when he presumes, lifts him up when he despairs, urges him onward in the path of obedience and service.

And when the interview comes to an end, the first word that rings in Peter's ears is—"Follow me!" And when Peter seeks to pry into things that do not concern him Jesus holds him to the message he has already given—"Follow me." Curiosity about John may well give place to thoughtfulness about himself, "Jesus saith unto

him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? *follow thou me.*"

It is a message for the disciples in every age and may contain some lessons peculiarly adapted to our land and time. We hear a great deal about the duty of leadership. Especially are educated men and women reminded of their obligation to take their place of leadership. Be it so! Our powers whether native or acquired are meant for use. Let one forge to the front in any line of endeavor for which he is fitted and carry others with him. Let him especially influence others to pursue worthy aims and to help on to triumph great causes of truth and right.

But there is another aspect of duty that is just as important. We are to be followers as well as leaders. This aspect of duty may make a less effective appeal to our egoistic age. It may not flatter our pride so much as that of leadership. But there is no real antagonism between them. The largest and best leadership is attained by those who humbly follow the lines marked out for them by the providence of God. And the valuable leaders of Christian thought and endeavor are always those who keep watching for the footsteps of their divine Leader. Christ puts no check on a holy ambition but rather spurs us on to the highest greatness when he says—"Follow thou me."

I. Follow me—*follow my teaching.* One who accepts another's views of religion or philosophy, especially one who accepts the distinctive peculiarities of his system of opinions is called his follower. We thus speak of the followers of Spinoza or Kant or Locke—of Mahomet or Buddha or Confucius. And thus also we call one who embraces the truth he announces—a follower of Christ. In the case of any philosophy of mere men the view is accepted because it commends itself to the mind that examines it, without much reference to the personality of the author. But Christ is recognized by his followers as one who speaks with authority and his teachings appeal to us



not only by their appearance of truth but by the supreme source of truth from which they come. His followers not only listen and weigh but surrender to the authoritative declarations of a Master. He came to bear witness unto the truth and the Kingdom he sets up in the world is a Kingdom of the truth. It is ours to accept his testimony and adhere to the truth, he declares, and because he declares it. In the fullest sense of the word we are to be followers — not primarily leaders, nor originators, but followers — yielding assent to every word which he speaks, acknowledging the binding force of every precept which he enjoins. He delivers a message and we reject it at our peril.

Where do we find the teachings of Christ? In general we may answer, "*In the scriptures.*" The Old Testament testified of him; he endorsed it by his constant appeal to it as the law of his human life. You cannot read the story of his life and fail to get the impression that it was saturated and dominated by the word of God as then possessed by the Jews. The New Testament gives yet clearer and fuller displays of the truth — as compared with the Old is like noonday compared with the dawn. It is the record of a revelation made by the advent of the Son of God. Like its predecessor, it is written under the inspiring guidance of the Spirit of God. The Spirit was promised to the Apostles to guide them into the knowledge of the truth and their claim is that they spake and wrote words which the Holy Ghost taught. The whole Bible, rightly interpreted, sets forth the teaching of Jesus and ought to receive our reverent attention. President Roosevelt closed an address to the Long Island Bible society in June, 1901, with these words of strenuous loyalty to the old Book.—"We plead for a closer and wider and deeper study of the Bible, so that our people may be in fact as well as in theory 'doers of the Word and not hearers only.'"

But let us for a moment confine ourselves to the teach-

ings of Jesus as uttered by himself during his earthly ministry. These are found in the four Gospels, which give us a four-fold picture of his life on earth, which tell us what he said and did. His example is very instructive but his words state clearly the things we are to believe. He speaks of the very highest things — of the hereafter, of immortality, of salvation, of God — and speaks with the positiveness of one who knows. How often he prefaces his address with — “I say unto you,” — “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” When the traveller returns from Italy or Egypt or Palestine he tells confidently what his eyes have seen in the country he has visited. So is Jesus an eye-witness of the land that lies beyond our present experience. Nay, it is his native land which he describes — his home with God. “He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.” John 3: 31-32. He came from God and revealed God — as a Spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, as a Father who has compassion on his prodigal children. He came from heaven and made known what its wisdom and grace devised for our ruined world. He proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of God with its prerequisite of a new nature and the blessedness that springs from character. He announced himself as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. We hear him say — “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” He foretold his own death and its atoning purpose. We hear him say — “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto

but to minister and to *give his life a ransom* for many." . . . And again in connection with the institution of the sacramental supper, he says—"This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed *for many* for the remission of sins." He tells of the last day—the day when he shall sit upon the throne of judgment and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, the sheep from the goats, the just from the unjust, and then he seals their destiny by adding—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal."

These are enough to show that Christ's teaching was a doctrine to be believed as well as a code to be observed. He was no enemy to theology. You might as well speak of nature as an enemy of science. It is not necessary that the bones of a system protrude. They may be covered over with the beautiful forms of nature or of actual human life but they exist. There is an underlying system of doctrine in the teachings of Christ that comes clearly to view when our attention is turned to it. He was no boneless, creedless sentimentalist—no jelly-fish or air-cushion adjusting himself to every sect or opinion. He spake truth and called upon all men who heard him to receive it. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." What a ring of conviction is here! Let us arrange our lives upon the same key as his—be followers of him in adherence to the truth he taught us. We may take issue with the creeds of men, but the creed of Christ is truth itself. With Tennyson we may say—

They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Still they are lights breaking through the clouds and hastening toward unhindered day. Let us not shut our eyes upon them, lest we shut out also the larger light that streams from the word of Christ himself.

Let knowledge grow from more to more  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul according well  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster.

II. Follow me — follow *my life*. A follower of Jesus is one who seeks to become like him — who takes him as an example and tries to walk in his steps. The fitness of this interpretation is so clear that it needs no illustration. To think as he thought, to feel as he felt, to do as he did — to labor and teach and minister, to love and sacrifice and endure — to do all things as he did — this surely is to follow him. Belief and conduct are very close of kin. Belief leads on to action and action often colors belief. If we accept cordially Christ's teachings they will move us to conform to his precepts and life. The ethical standard of Christ is confessedly the highest reached by man and is illustrated by his perfect example. It thus gets a power over men that no mere code of morals could exert. It is concrete truth — virtuous action — that influences others to be virtuous. When Jesus goes before us in the way of righteousness we are drawn into the same way by contemplating his acts. Whatever sentiment is embodied in action gets life and power thereby. "Follow my directions," makes no such appeal to us as when Jesus walks before us and says — Follow me! We cannot set forth in few words the perfect life. Our age has been rich in the endeavor to interpret the life of Christ to the scholar and to the child. But no work of mere man can take the place of the brief biographies written by the inspired evangelists. No picture of human genius impressed upon the mind can compensate for lack of familiarity with the simple story of the Gospels. Let each for himself come into touch with the Son of man by studying the original records of his life.

As we thus study the portrait of the man, Christ Jesus, certain features will come out in bold relief. First of all we find *him anchored by the throne of God*, his whole life regulated by the will of God, his whole soul permeated with the thought of God. How many times he speaks of his Father and of him that sent him! We might condense the meaning of them all in his own familiar words that tell of fellowship without break or reserve — “He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” In equal prominence appears another trait of his character — his *amazing love for men*. He was no mere pietist. He was equally pious and philanthropic. The two traits were complementary, each affording background for the display of the other. He went about doing good, spending his strength in ministering to human need. He tells us that he came to seek and save the lost and at last he gave his life a ransom for many.

The fine *balance* of his character attracts the attention of all who study it. What strength and yet what gentleness! What simplicity and yet what dignity! What meekness and yet what firmness! What calmness and yet what sensitiveness of soul! What love of nature — of sparrow and lily and child — is combined with supreme love of God and souls of men! What winsomeness is added to sinlessness to make him the perfect example of men!

And now to all this he invites you and me. To such a sense of God and enthusiasm for humanity, to this many-sided ideal of perfection he calls us all when he says — “Follow me.” The life of the world has furnished many inspiring examples. Not a few men have left the world richer for all time by the nobility of their deeds. We could not, if he would, we would not, if we could, dispossess ourselves of the heritage that descends to us out of the ages past. But no one of the world’s worthies approaches the rounded, symmetrical, completeness of the



life of our Saviour. Though he is more than an example, — though he is our royal, atoning Redeemer — he is not less a man and a model for our invitation. Fellow Christian, the universal verdict of men is that Jesus' character is unique, without spot or blemish. Can we then acquit ourselves of blame if we neglect or refuse to follow him?

Where shall we find a perfect life, whereby  
To shape our lives for all eternity?

This man is great and wise; the world reveres him,  
Reveres, but cannot love his heart of stone;  
And so it dares not follow, though it fears him,  
But bids him walk his mountain path alone.

That man is good and gentle, all men love him,  
Yet dare not ask his feeble arm for aid;  
The world's best work is ever far above him,  
He shrinks beneath the storm-capped mountain shade.

O loveless strength! O strengthless love! the master,  
Whose life shall shape our lives is not as thou;  
Sweet Friend in peace, strong Saviour in disaster,  
Our heart of hearts enfolds thine image now.

Be Christ's the fair and perfect life, whereby,  
We shape our lives for all eternity.

— *C. F. Richards.*

III. Follow me — follow my banner. It is a rallying call from the Leader of a great cause — from the Captain of the Lord's host. How much importance we attach to the flag! It may stand for a society or an institution or a cause. It may gather about it all the associations of fatherland and fireside as the flag of the land we love the best. It is sacred as the symbol of what we hold dear.



I heard a man in the frozen North with more protruding granite than soil tell why he would not seek a home under more genial skies this side of the line—"I want to stay beneath the flag of Old England." I heard Chaplain McCabe tell how the prisoners in Libby Prison, during the great Civil War, gave their last garments of white or red or blue to make a rude flag for the Fourth of July and how when he was returning home, emaciated and feeble on the deck of the vessel he kissed the folds of the old flag as it floated into his cot while, with tears of joy in his eyes, he held it to his breast. What is it that moves us in Whittier's simple story of Barbara Frietchie? It is her simple, yet sublime, loyalty to the flag of the free. To something like this we are summoned when Jesus raises the standard of the cross and says—"Follow me."

He has organized his church to display and maintain his banner among men. It is the recruiting agency and the camp of instruction of the army of the Lord. Nay, it is the army itself under marching orders, moving forward to the conquest of the world. "Follow me," means identification with the Church in its organized form and its essential activities. It may not be all that the Captain of our salvation meant it to be. There may be lines of division that had better be obliterated. Its several parts may not co-operate to secure the common end. The esprit de corps may lag and show half-hearted endeavor. Courage may be wanting to stand the shock of battle for Christ's cross and crown. But, with all its confessed shortcomings, the Church is Christ's own and his followers must not stand aloof from it. It is the place of promised blessing, where believers may grow side by side in Christian grace. If it is not what it ought to be you can make it better in the little corner you occupy. Take a larger share in its work and you will find a larger profit and pleasure in its service. Happy is the man or woman who makes the church the place of privilege and not of duty —

a home and not a mere lodging place — a comradeship and not a mere aggregation.

It is possible, however, for one to be a member of the Church and yet not a close follower of Jesus Christ. He may even be near to the preacher and not very near to the Christ. This exhortation goes behind officers and organization to the Church's living Head. It is personal loyalty to the Lord himself that is here urged — "Follow thou *me*." Whatever other claimants of your devotion may appear you must never forget that you belong to Christ. You must stand for him, true to your colors, faithful to your vows.

What will you do when the day of trial comes? Will you make a truce with evil? Or will you hold the field for Christ against all comers?

The test of your loyalty may come in very simple fashion. The temptation may be nothing very unusual. It may be to suppress your testimony for Jesus in the company of the irreligious. It may be solicitation to join the crowd in what your conscience scarcely approves. It may come from your social circle, your partners in business, your fellow partizans who constrain you to share with them in a doubtful transaction. It may appeal to you with the urgent claims of necessity. Something you prize will suffer if you fail to join with them.

But is there not a paramount necessity for the Christian? Let his answer be — "Come what will I must be loyal to my Master. I must not merit the reproach of breaking from his ranks and doing the work of his enemies." May the blessed spirit in every such day of danger remind us of our living Lord and our first and foremost obligation to be loyal to Him.

But following Christ means more than resistance to attack. It means a gracious invasion under his leadership. This evil world is to be conquered and brought under the dominion of Jesus. Our marching orders are — "Go ye into all the world and preach the good news to every

creature." Jesus came to seek and save the lost and lost men everywhere and the lost nations of the earth are the field of conquest for his followers. The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil and wherever evil lifts its hideous head it is Christ-like to strike it a blow. Who can tell what the 20th century will disclose? We call this a missionary age. Will the Gospel be carried to every land and tribe in this century? We call this a philanthropic age. Will the love of man grow more intense as the years go until no iniquity can withstand its fiery zeal?

What will you and I do in our generation? Will we help or hinder the triumph of Jesus? Will we be mere camp-followers in his army or among the never despairing invincibles who press on toward the final victory? Our hope of victory is sure. The Commander of the host says—"Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world." It is no mere captain's battle, however valiant the captains may be. The commander-in-chief is ever within hailing distance. When at any point along the line there is loss, it is because we disregard his wise orders. He will make this world beautiful if we will only come to his help. He will by his spirit make the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose whenever the Church is ready to follow him whithersoever he goeth.

There's a fount about to stream,  
There's a light about to beam,  
There's a warmth about to glow,  
There's a flower about to blow.  
There's a midnight blackness changing  
    Into gray:  
Men of thought and men of action clear the way!  
    Once the welcome light has broken  
    Who shall say,  
What the unimagined glories  
    Of the day?

What the evils that shall perish  
In its ray?

Members of the class of 1902, let me urge you to keep your eye on your Master. The emphasis of the text might well be laid on the last word — Follow *me*. Let Jesus engage your eye and your heart and your will — Jesus more than any other — Jesus rather than any other. To be subject to the absolute domination of any fellow-man is a degradation, though, alas, no uncommon thing in this commonwealth. But to surrender to the will of your rightful Lord and Master is ennobling — is the very acme of freedom. The liberty is perfect in proportion as the surrender is complete. The happy Christian is the thoroughgoing, out-and-out Christian.

May I urge you to unreserved devotion to Him? Some of you will follow his flag to other lands; most of you will accept posts of duty in our own land. But wherever you go and whatever you do, keep floating in front of you the flag of the Kingdom of Christ, whose cause in the world is everywhere paramount to every other. Said one in Jesus' time — "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Let there be no reserved sections of your life from which Christ is excluded. Get riches, if you will, but not in unclean ways, nor for its sake, nor for your sake alone but for Christ's sake.

Be ambitious, if you will, but for service rather than glory. Pursue literature, music, art, statesmanship — but whatever your attainments or gains, cast them all at Jesus' feet, keep your eye on Him — call no man Master but Him and no pursuit Master at all.

General Sansom, a brave general of the Union forces, was directed to take a certain fort in front of Vicksburg and as the men wavered under the enfilading fire of shot and canister, the fearless Commander seized the colors of a regiment and rushing to the front, waved them over his head and shouted — "Forward men! We

must and will go into that fort. Who will follow me?" Inspired by his example, the men pressed on and gained the ditch in front of the fort without delay.

Such a rallying cry comes to the Church of today — to you and me. Will we heed it? Yes, there may be a leaden hail where Jesus leads, there may be attack and wounds and anguish of spirit, there may be self-denial and cross-bearing and loss of life. But still he calls — Who will follow me? — whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospels the same shall save it. And what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul. The victory of personal completeness and final glory will be yours. You will scale the battlements of heaven and be enrolled among the heroes of the great war of all the world — the war of the Captain of our salvation against sin and Satan.

When the roll of the faithful is called up yonder, may you and I be there. With the battle scars all healed, with past anguish all forgotten, with palms of victory in our hands, with our eyes still on Jesus, may we everyone participate in that swelling song of praise to our triumphant Commander — *Thou art worthy* for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests and we shall reign on earth.

Follow Jesus Christ through your life and I am sure it will be well with you both here and hereafter.

## SERMON XVIII, 1903

### KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS

*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.— Galatians 6: 14.*

“**T**HE age of chivalry has gone; the age of humanity has come.” To this sentiment we may subscribe and yet claim that the spirit of chivalry abides and is fitted to adorn and ennoble any age.

When the institution was at the zenith of its history, there were chevaliers who lacked the lofty sentiment it was designed to cherish. Yet it was in general as Burke declared, “the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise.”

Imagine a young nobleman of twenty-one years, after fourteen years of training and pleasant anticipation, surrounded by a multitude of men and women of rank assembled to do him honor. He stands forth within full view and hearing of them all and declares his vow to “speak the truth, to succor the helpless and oppressed and never to turn back from an enemy,” and then is solemnly invested with the symbols and instruments of the order, the belt and spurs of the horseman and the lance of the conquering knight. The long training culminating in such a significant ceremony could not but impress the young novitiate and mould him into the form of the splendid ideal. He would rise from his knees a new man, with the purpose to be true and tender and brave. While some would abide in the shell of the outward form and only glory in the fiery charge and the gleaming lance, others would fulfil the poet’s picture of a knight —



Who revered his conscience as his king,  
Whose glory was redressing human wrongs,  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it,  
Who loved one only and who clave to her.

The essential elements of chivalry are with us still. The trappings, the joust, the tournament, the lance and spur, the crusade have passed away; but courtesy, great-heartedness, valor and honor abide with us. Paul, the Missionary, was a knight in the first Christian century and through all the Christian centuries since, there have been those who have followed after him, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. As one has said — "The modern phenomenon has in him the mediæval phenomenon, a chevalier." We have in Paul's words the Christian's vows of knightly devotion and service to his Master — "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian is a knight of the cross and if the twelfth century gave opportunity for splendid service,

When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight,

the chances of the twentieth century are unparalleled and the call for heroes was never louder nor more impressive than now. Are any of us ready to respond to the call in the words of the Apostle, glorying only in the cross?

Let our theme be — The knights of the cross.

I. The knights of the cross are *saved by it*. The knights of the cross are sinners of mankind and by nature children of wrath even as others. They differ from many in being conscious of sin. They have realized in some measure their degradation and their doom. Sin has ceased to be with them a peccadillo, an indiscretion, a mistake, a pardonable offense, an unimportant breach of rule.

It is seen in the light of a holy and just law of which it is a violation and of a holy and august God against whom it is a grievous offense. It is seen under the lurid blaze of Sinai and in the clear light of Calvary. More than anywhere else is sin seen in its true colors in the death of the Redeemer. If Paul could say—"By the law is the knowledge of sin," the church of God reading from the experience of believers in every age might say—"By the cross is the knowledge of sin." Economists tell us there is a poverty of lack of goods and a greater poverty of lack of wants. So there is a spiritual poverty of sin and there is a deeper poverty of our ignorance of sin. It is the glory of the cross that it both makes us conscious of our sin and enriches us with forgiveness and peace. It creates the want which it supplies. It humbles that it may exalt. It awakens a profound sense of sin that it may appease it with plenteous redemption. It wrings from the guilty sinner the cry of the aroused conscience that it may answer it and put it to silence with the peace-speaking atonement.

Well might we be in consternation when we reflect on the might and majesty and purity of God with whom we have to do. How puny must be our defense against his Almighty Arm! I crush with the slightest pressure of my finger the tiny insect that all unconscious of danger traverses the page as I write. Far more easily might you or I be crushed beneath the finger of God. But, alas, until the Spirit comes to unveil the deceitful heart, we are as ignorant of danger as the insect. The flatteries of the darkened heart cause us to have not only inadequate thoughts of ourselves, but positive delusions concerning our state. Like Laodicea, we know not that we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked," we fancy ourselves rich and increased in goods and having need of nothing. If we only come to know the truth about ourselves, we are ready to cry out in bitterness of soul—"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and

done evil in thy sight," and vaguely reaching out toward the Deliverer the Gospel brings, we ask — "What must we do to be saved?" At such a time the satisfying answer to all the accusations of a quickened and guilty conscience is the cross of Jesus Christ — Christ — and him crucified. Not the cross separated from his personality but the Crucified One meets all the sinner's need. And yet it is the cross, the death of Jesus, the blood of atonement that attracts his gaze at such a time above every other feature of the Gospel. It becomes, if I may so speak, the most picturesque figure in the experience of his conversion. It stands out bold and clear, not isolated indeed, but central and conspicuous, the ground of peace, the door of hope. Says Bunyan —

Thus far did I come, laden with my sin,  
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in  
Till I came hither. What place is this?  
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?  
Must here the burden fall from off my back?  
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?  
Blest cross! Blest sepulchre! Blest rather be  
The man that there was put to shame for me.

The cross gives the sinner an answer to every accuser. Let Justice stand forth to plead against him. The cross has satisfied every claim that justice can present. Let Law with stern and unchanging visage demand that her threatenings be fulfilled. The cross has magnified the law and made it honorable in the endurance by Him who hanged thereon of an equivalent penalty for the sins of men. Let Satan, the accuser of the brethren, brandish his sword and issue his fiendish challenge in the believer's face and seek to reduce him to despair. With his eye on the cross, he can answer the challenge with triumphant boldness — "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

To Martin Luther said the devil —“ You’re a miserable sinner.” “ I know it.” “ You deserve to go to hell.” “ I know it.” “ You’re going there.” “ Now you lie, for I am saved by his blood who died for me.”

The story of the conversion of Colonel Gardiner is almost trite, yet it is historic and pertinent. He had been living a roystering, reckless life and one night as he retired from his carousals his eye lit on a book with this attractive title —“ *The Christian Soldier, or Heaven Taken By Storm.*” He picked it up with the intention of making it the mark of his ridicule and contempt. But as he read, he fell asleep and dreamed and in his dream he saw a bright light upon the book and suspended in the air a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross and he heard some one say —“ This I did for thee. What hast thou done for me?” He awoke conscience-stricken and sought and found pardon at the foot of the cross. The sight of the cross both awakened and soothed him, brought him to penitence and peace. So Bunyan’s pilgrim got rid of his burden at the cross. Whoever has become a knight of the cross has been initiated by the same process, varying in intensity and detail but the same in contrition for sin and peace by a sight of the crucified one. Fellow sinner, if you would enter this noble rank, the way is open. But you must stoop to enter, you must kneel at the cross. Your burden will fall off at the threshold and you will rise to go on your way rejoicing, having found joy and peace in believing in Him who saves his people from their sins.

II. The knights of the cross are its interpreters and defenders. They raise it aloft as their standard. They adhere to the doctrines of the cross and are set for their maintenance.

What mean we by the cross? It is no meaningless symbol, a mere shape or figure, a rallying centre without significance. It is no idle charm, or ornament to a person or a spire. It is no empty word, a thing of rhetoric,

something to conjure with. It is no mere dividing line between Christian and anti-Christian hosts. It has a meaning for the enlisted soul and for the world—a meaning clear and unmistakable, deep and satisfying.

By the cross Paul means the doctrine of the atoning death of Christ. There is indeed light streaming from the cross of Christ in many directions. It affords the grandest example of self-sacrifice the world has seen. It reveals God to man and man to himself. It is all radiant with the love of God. But the centre and core of its meaning is the propitiation Jesus made for our sins, the ground of reconciliation with God laid by his atoning sacrifice. It is expressed by the Master himself in such words as these—"Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." . . . "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . I lay down my life for the sheep." "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for the remission of the sins of many." These expressions are clear enough. They tell us how Jesus voluntarily laid down his own life as a ransom for many. Paul only unfolds a little more fully the doctrine of the cross. Under the guidance of the promised Spirit, in words which the Holy Ghost teaches, he interprets the event of Jesus' death after it occurred. He tells us that Jesus "died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God," that "God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," that "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" it has been made possible for God to be "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In these sentences we have the very essence of Paul's teaching upon this essential theme. There is no mincing of words, no fencing on the right hand and the left, no drawing of hairlines. He who runs may read what Paul means and the uncritical reader drinks in the truth with every perusal of the epistles.



If the critics only keep on eulogizing the Bible and leave the text unmutilated except in their own minds and the people keep on reading it, we need not fear the result of their criticisms. They will pass away and the word will continue to shine in its own light and the generations to come will be illumined by the word of God which endureth forever.

It is altogether possible that the meaning of the cross will not be quite the same to all persons. One may be impressed with one phase of its teaching and another with another. To one it may be a spring of hope; to another, a spring of holiness. One may be awed by its mystery and another may be attracted by its love. And yet can we do better than to hold fast to the undiluted Pauline teaching and to reject any contrary view of the atonement however lauded as resting on a more rational basis? We are suspicious of diluted views of sin and law and justice. Nor is our suspicion allayed when we find the advocates of some more modern view holding fast to words whose use is distinct and fixed, while emptying them of their distinctive meaning. We hear of *vicarious suffering* and find that instead of having its usual, sharply-defined content of suffering instead of another, the phrase is applied to every form of sympathetic suffering. It does not mean substitution but fellowship, not taking the sinner's place but standing by his side, the suffering of a mother as she beholds the sufferings of her child, of the family when any member of it incurs dishonor. Then, too, we find the word satisfaction used in a similar way. It has had a clear meaning of satisfaction to divine justice. But though the stalwart word is retained, it is shorn of its strength, for justice is well-nigh eliminated from the vocabulary of this modern view and from the character of God. I searched in vain through a recent and admirable work to find the word justice in connection with the discussion of the atonement. Although the words sin and law, atonement and vicarious suffering, ex-



piation and satisfaction are found, the justice of God is never mentioned. Has not the strong coloring faded out of these words when they are used without any reference to the divine justice? What is sin if there be no righteous moral Governor? What is atonement on the divine side, if there be no justice to be appeased? The mystery of the cross grows upon us, if there is no reason for the sufferings of Christ in the necessities of the case, in the demands of inflexible justice of Him with whom we have to do.

Let the knights of the cross face the awful facts of their sinful, lost, ruined state and think of sin as an offense against a holy law and a holy and just God. Then let them glory in the safe hiding place afforded them in the cleft rock of the Redeemer's side and keep on telling to a lost world "the old, old story of the cross," as the propitiation for our sins, the satisfaction to divine justice and because of this the utmost display of the divine love.

III. The knights of the cross march under the banner of the cross to the conquest of the world. They are not content to enjoy its shelter while others are out in the storm. They are acknowledged debtors to the world till all the nations are under its protection. It cannot be too much to say that one cannot be a Christian who has none of the evangelistic spirit and that he is most like Christ whose strong desire is to spread the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. Mr. Moody said—"Before my conversion I worked toward the cross, but since then I have worked from the cross; then I worked to be saved, now I work because I am saved." He does not hoard the treasure won but distributes it to others and by a strange law of spiritual economics increases it for himself. He grows in grace as he gives it away.

The fact of the crucifixion is not one to be concealed anywhere. Jesus did not seek to escape from the cross, but pressed on to Jerusalem to endure its torture and

shame. Nor would he have his disciples hide it from any sinner's view. On the contrary he instituted a memorial to keep it ever fresh in their recollection. The Papal missionaries to the Chinese not only misinterpreted the mind of the Master, but misrepresented the Gospel itself by the suppression of all testimony to his death. The very heart of the Gospel lies in the cross.

So far from keeping under all reference to the cross, we must keep it conspicuous in our propagation of the Gospel. After Constantine's vision of the cross in the heavens his battle-cry was—"In hoc signo vinces"—by this sign we conquer. Let it be ours likewise. That which distinguishes Christianity from every other religion is the cross of Christ and God forbid that we should glory save in the cross and in Him who was nailed to it. Listen to Paul as he writes to the Corinthians—(1 Cor. 1:17)—"Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words lest the cross be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." . . . "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Dr. Storrs speaks of Jesus as the "supreme visionary of the world," when he said when the inquiring Greeks sought him—"And I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." The cross was then the symbol of shame, the way of death for the worst criminal. To die thus seemed like the vanishing of the last flickering hope of success, the descent into oblivion. Yet Jesus in that hour declared it to be the beginning of power,

the condition of the world's conquest. And his words are coming true. The vision is coming to a fuller realization as the centuries pass and the magnetic, transforming power of the cross is felt today as never before in the history of the world. Men are going forth into all lands bearing aloft the standard of the cross and strong in the conviction that the Master's words were true and that the Crucified One will draw all men unto himself.

What induces any one to become a missionary to the heathen? If the religion of Christ is not essential, if it is not the only hope of the world, why make sacrifices to send it abroad? If any other religion answers the need of any people, why seek to displace it by another? If Christianity offers nothing that the heathen religions cannot furnish, why are precious lives given to such a useless task? It is not so. The missionary goes because he believes the world is dying without the Gospel, that it contains the only remedy for sin-sick humanity.

What will he do when he reaches the benighted lands? What will he say to weary, heavy-laden, burdened souls? Will he linger long by the beautiful precepts sprinkled through their own sacred writings? Will he compare the ethical precepts of Christ and urge their acceptance as something just a little better? Will he not rather satisfy the hungry heart with the announcement of forgiveness? Will he not disclose the love of God to one who seeks in vain to appease the anger of his gods? Will he not point to the crucified one and say—"There is the propitiation for your sins"? Will he not tell the story of the cross and say—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"? Tidings such as these are found nowhere else. They meet the sinner's need. They answer that cry—that universal cry—that comes out of the depths of the human soul everywhere—What must I do to be saved?

Dr. Burrell tells a story received by him from the lips

of a veteran missionary in India — Dr. Chamberlain — of one coming to the Ganges on hands and knees to bathe in its waters that he might find peace for his conscience. He crept out of the river and lay upon its banks in despair because his gnawing pain remained. As he lay there, he heard the missionary's voice as he preached the Gospel under a banyan tree near by. He came nearer and heard the story of the cross and it made an instant appeal to him. He rose upon his knees and listened, then to his feet, then clapped his hands and cried — "That's what I want! That's what I want!" It is what men everywhere want. Down in the slums of our great cities and out in the wild life of the frontier and in the heart of Africa and along the coast of Siam and in India and Egypt this is the news men are hungry to hear. Well may our heroic missionaries go forth with the joyous enthusiasm of couriers of good tidings, for they have something to give adapted to the wants of those they address. Gallant knights are they — the Judsons and Paton and Mackay — Dunlap and McCauley and Mateer — and our own noble standard-bearers in Egypt and India. Will any among us be honored to stand by their side? Will any among us occupy these high places of the field? Let us at least enter into the splendid fellowship of those who do by being missionaries wherever God places us and by giving and praying for the missionary cause. We can salute the same flag and fight the same battle and win like victories by the same means. All hail! this blessed day when the open door beckons every Christian to service, when the Macedonian cry is sounding in the ears of the whole church and the chances for knightly devotion abound. Wherever we labor and in whatever calling let us each do our part in exalting the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us help to send its glad message to the ends of the earth in the generation in which we live.

Members of the class of 1903, I rejoice to believe that

most of you, perhaps all of you, are *saved* by the cross. If any one is yet away from Christ, I pray you to hasten to him ere the thickening cares of life cast up a barrier hard to overcome or the chains of habit bind you to eternal death. What will it profit you when your life ends, however great in learning, riches and honor it may have been, if you are unsaved? Once more I invite you to the cross of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Some of you will be *preachers* of the cross. I submit to you there is no higher vocation than this. Dr. Cuyler, when demitting his charge, said to his people concerning his life in the ministry—"When I recall the joy of my 44 years of public ministry, I often shudder at the fact of how near I came to losing it. For many months my mind was balancing between the attractions of a legal and political career. A single hour in a village prayer-meeting turned the scale. . . . Would that I could lift up my voice in every academy, college and university on the broad continent. I would say to every gifted Christian youth—God and humanity have need of you."

Is it too much to say that every educated young man with sufficient gifts ought to be able—not to give reasons why he should, but reasons why he should not enter the Gospel ministry? All other avenues are full but this. It may not offer large worldly gains, but it does offer large returns of satisfaction now and large rewards of grace hereafter.

I wish your theology might get from the start a definite and indelible stamp from the cross. Some months ago I had occasion to take a short trip through the country to a place I had never visited. As the way was new, I watched with some eagerness the finger-boards at the parting of the ways. Some were bold and clear and a joy to the ignorant traveller's heart, others were a disappointment as the names and figures in some were wholly faded out and in others scarcely decipherable.



Others were so placed that it was difficult to tell in which direction they were pointing. Let it not be so with you. Point the wayfarer on life's highway without vagueness or veering to Christ and him crucified. Say to every inquiring soul in unmistakable terms — To the cross! to the cross! "Be determined like Saul to know nothing among your people save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Finally, my young friends, let me say to you — Use the cross in your spiritual life. Sit beneath it and think. You will be humbled by a sight of its anguish and constrained by its love and moved to self-sacrifice by its inspiring example.

Keep your eye there and you will be *humble*. Among the eulogies of Emerson lately given, I was a little surprised to find this given as a matter of praise that "he taught men not to be humble." If it be so, I would rather take a lesson from the Seer of Nazareth than from the seer of Concord — from the lowly Nazarene who said — "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." It becomes us to be humble in view of what we are and of what God is.

Keep your eye on the cross and *your love will grow*. You will love him who has so loved you. You will be impelled by love like his to serve mankind. You will grow in holiness which is the fruit of love. The world will be crucified unto you and you unto the world.

Keep your eye on the cross and you will be *happy*. It will be a well-spring of joy to you. You will see the price of your ransom and rejoice in your liberty. You will rest anew on the foundation of your faith and be at peace. Your feet will be on the rock and you will have a new song in your mouth, even praise to our God.

In view of all the cross is to you — of forgiveness and purity and abounding joy — and in view of all it is to the world — of hope and renewal and deliverance, let your banner, your battle-cry, and your song of triumph be — The Cross! The Cross!



Thy cross and passion and thy precious death  
While I have mortal breath,  
Shall be my spring of love and work and praise,  
The life of all my days;  
Till all the mystery of love supreme  
Be solved in glory, glory's endless theme.

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our  
Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me  
and I unto the world."

## SERMON XIX, 1904

### THE MANLINESS OF CHRIST

*Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them—"Whom seek ye?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus saith unto them, "I am He."—John 18: 4, 5.*

IF, as the poet says—"The Christian is the highest style of man," it is because he copies after a perfect model. Jesus of Nazareth acquitted himself as a man at every stage and crisis of his earthly course. To follow him closely is to attain the highest possible excellence.

He knew how to *bear prosperity*. Many a man who boldly confronts a foe will fail to resist the enticements of a friend. He who quails not before the angry mob may be swerved from the right line of integrity by the huzzas of the cheering crowd. It is one of the severest tests of manliness when those who admire a man and lift him into prominence, urge upon him what duty forbids him to accept. To listen to the "still, small voice" within, and turn away from the clamor of the mistaken multitude without, requireth the rarest courage. He is truly self-poised who can stand erect despite both the false attraction of friends and the resistance of foes. How did Jesus endure this supreme test? In the palmy days of his public ministry, when multitudes came to hear him, how did he act? He never swerved in the least from the straight line of uprightness and truth. To great and to small he declared the same message. In the Sermon on the Mount he presented an ideal of true living that contradicted squarely the notions then prevalent. To Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, He spake no flatter-

ing conciliatory words because of his high position. He astonished him with the bold challenge — "You must be born again." Wherever he was, whether at the well of Sychar talking with the women of Samaria, or in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, He spake brave, honest words, such as were needed. He yielded neither to Mary at Cana, nor to his brethren in their excessive prudence, nor to his disciples who would stay him from the cross, nor to the multitude who would take him by force and make him a king.

It is, however, under circumstances of an opposite character that the text presents the man Christ Jesus. *He knew how to bear adversity.* Within a few hours of his life have been crowded many important events and experiences. The Last Supper was not yet finished when Judas went out into the night to carry out his black designs against his Master. While he was busy with the chief priests consummating his villainous bargain and gathering the motley crowd that came with swords and staves to apprehend him, the Son of Man was passing through the untold agonies of Gethsemane. Though he shrank from the cup that contained ingredients of Divine wrath as well as hellish fury, such as no martyr ever experienced, he yet prevailed in prayer to the Father so as to say heartily — "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And now the band is at the garden gate eagerly seeking their prey. Judas leads them to the spot whither he knew his Master was accustomed to resort with his disciples. But the base kiss, the prearranged signal by which he should single him out from the rest, was not needed. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them — Whom seek ye? They answer him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them — I am He."

Let us consider — "The Manliness of Christ" as brought out in this connection. It is clearly manliness shown in circumstances of adversity, of seizure, of ap-

proaching disgrace and death, of disaster and defeat apparently overwhelming. How did he act in the trying moment? In what does his manliness appear?

I. The manliness of Christ does not consist, in any measure, in physical strength, nor arise from the consciousness thereof.

When he came boldly forth to meet his enemies, it was not because he relied on any physical force to resist them. When Peter rashly used his sword and struck a servant of the high-priest, Jesus disclaimed all responsibility for the act by touching his wound and healing it. He refused to use the force that was under his control, or to call to his aid the legions of angels on high that stood ready to do his bidding. In his own strength, as a man, he certainly was not stronger than others; and in the devoted, but defenseless eleven that were with Him in the garden, He had but a poor dependence. Nor did he expect the Divine power to be put forth in his behalf at this point. He did not expect to escape through a panic of his foes, as the sequel shows he might have done. It was in the utter abandonment of all these things as a ground of fearlessness that his true nobility as a man appeared.

It may seem needless to assert this point. But when such stress is laid on physical culture as in our time and popular helps to this are glorified as the only *manly sports*, it may not be amiss to estimate physical strength at its true value as related to manhood. A man may be a champion in the prize ring and be a poltroon. He may be the Samson of his neighborhood and be nothing but a bully and a coward after all. Let health and strength be sought by means of athletic sports, but let them not be canonized and exalted above measure but made to serve a manly spirit that resides within a sound body.

II. The manliness of Christ was not mere *hardihood*. Fearlessness does indeed enter into true manliness; but

if it stands alone, it comes far short of it; it is grim and unlovely, commanding respect but kindling no enthusiasm. The sentiment of Emerson — "Always do what you are afraid to do," must be taken with some allowance. To accustom one's self to face danger, when circumstances demand it, is no doubt an advantage: but to court danger for sake of our own discipline alone is scarcely justifiable.

The same false principle underlies what has been falsely called the "code of honor." It applauds recklessness of danger at the expense of all moral considerations. It gives a stamp to the counterfeit that belongs of right only to the genuine coin. It writes the word "honor" on an act that by a correct standard would be judged dishonorable. We condemn with one voice the man who trifles with his own life and that of others by sporting on the edge of a precipice or sailing too near the thundering cataract. Wherein does it differ from this, when two men deliberately place each other's lives in peril by firing at one another? Wherein does it differ except in greater wrong-doing and guilt? And though men admire and extol the bravery of a Hodgson, is not the applause of good men mixed with blame when there is evidence of undue recklessness of life in the brave act? We express our disapprobation by calling it foolhardiness.

To no such useless, aimless sacrifice did Jesus lend the sanction of his example. How careful he was to secure the safety of His disciples? He would not have them unnecessarily exposed by association with him. He guards against any mistake by assuring them that he was the one they sought; and then said — "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

III. The manliness of Christ appeared in *fearless action for what was worth the risk* — yea, in view of his foreknowledge, we may rather say, for what was worth the *sacrifice*. He knew all that was about to happen and with undaunted face came forth to meet his assailants.

We might see a reason sufficient for his conduct in his desire to spare his disciples. Like the mother-bird drawing attention to herself in order to protect her brood, he took the brunt of the attack upon himself and averted it from them. But there was a further reason of greater weight; He had a work to do that was not yet finished. He had undertaken to redeem the world from sin and he could not do this but by paying the price of his own blood. He was commissioned of the Father to fulfil the law and satisfy the justice of God and was straitened until His commission was fully carried out. And now His hour was come. The time was at hand when he should be offered up, and with all that was before him present to his mind, he gave himself up to be taken, arraigned, condemned and crucified. For the joy that was set before Him — the joy of ransomed souls, the fruit of the travail of his own soul — he endured the cross, despising the shame.

It is this having an adequate reason for the risk we run that raises freedom from fear into the region of true manliness. If for the sake of truth, liberty or duty, we surrender life itself, we do well and nobly. There is the true ring in the words —

I dare do all that becomes a man:  
Who dares do more is none.

To do what conscience bids us do is always manly. To have the approval of our own hearts and the approval of God who is greater than our hearts is a most worthy aspiration. And though we may not be called to posts of peculiar danger, where gallantry may be conspicuous, we may each of us act bravely in our own sphere of labor and influence. As another has truly said — "The everyday courage of doing your duty is the grandest courage of all." It is this brave fidelity in ordinary life that prepares one for the test of the day of special trial. Men



do not spring suddenly into magnanimity of character. The act of Jesus in this scene at the garden's edge was consistent with all that went before. So it is by doing as we pass along what each day demands of us that we are braced for the emergency that strains our stability to the utmost. It was life-long fearlessness in behalf of the truth that gained for John Knox, when he died, this encomium from his antagonist—"There lies one who never feared the face of man."

IV. The manliness of Christ was seen in his *patient, single-handed endurance*. He willingly trod the wine-press alone. He knew what would come upon him. He saw beforehand the mockery, indignity, humiliation of the trial, the pain and shame of the cross, the deeper sorrow of the Father's desertion, yet he calmly, resolutely, went forward to drink the cup the Father mingled.

There was no sustaining excitement—nothing but quiet acceptance of what lay before him. Often the soldier gets a degree of credit for what is done in a spasm of enthusiasm that is out of all proportion to the actual courage exercised. The Pennsylvania Reserves did many valiant things before that gallant charge at Round Top that turned the tide of battle at Gettysburg; and it may be that greater courage was shown where less praise was given. There is a support from companionship in arms, or an inspiration from the situation sometimes that contributes to gallant achievement. But when one stands alone at the post of danger, or goes unsupported to the place of death, courage is put to a harder test. The pilot at the helm of the burning ship, doing all in his power to save the passengers on board and falling headlong at the last; the French physician going into the dissecting room and examining and recording the facts concerning the plague for the benefit of mankind, and then dying himself as its victim—as he expected to do—teach us the nobility of self-sacrifice. What we admire in them shines most conspicuously in the life and death of the Son

of Man. "He loved the church and gave himself for it." "He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." To save the lost, he assumed their place and died in their stead. To the executioners of the divine law he says—"Let these go their way," because he comes to pay all its just demands. To all this he went forward *alone*. From this point onward, of the people there was none with him. He dismissed the disciples from his company and went unattended to his trial and crucifixion. Yet he never wavered. He steadily pursued his path and work till he cried—"It is finished," and gave up the ghost.

It is difficult to consider the manliness of Jesus, shutting out all thoughts of his divinity. We cannot forget, in looking at him on the human side, that he is God as well as man—indeed his divinity is very plainly implied in what is here written of him. Only as God could he foreknow what was certain to come to pass. We need not quote passages besides this one to prove his omniscience. This same evangelist tells us (2:24)—"He needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." And Peter is recorded as saying to Jesus—"Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

His divinity is that which gives value to his work and glory to his purpose of redemption. Had he been only a man, his purpose would have failed; but he achieved his object through the infinite value given to his sacrifice by his divine person. Let us bless his name that, though he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, and that through his obedience he has procured salvation for all who believe in his name.

But while we never forgot the height from which he came—his glory as the only-begotten of the Father—we do well to contemplate him as a man giving us a model

life for our imitation. It is likewise through his humanity that he reveals the glory of God unto men.

Jesus of Nazareth is a historical character and it is the glory of Christianity as it appears in history that its Founder is absolutely spotless. Let his character be submitted to whatever tests, it never fails; it only shines the brighter under thorough investigation. Does it stand the test of manliness? To every infidel and scoffer we boldly answer, Yes! In prosperity and adversity, in favor and disfavor, in triumph and defeat, in life and death he always did as a man ought to do. In this single incident, what nobleness appears! what openness of character! what fearlessness! what thoughtfulness of others! what dignity of action!

Let us try to imitate him in all His manly traits. Let us seek to have the same mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus. Let us listen to the word of his servant—"Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong."

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!

Say not the days are evil.—Who's to blame?

And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!

Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!

It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,

How hard the battle goes, the day, how long,

Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

Do I forget that a large portion of the class is of the

gentler sex? By no means. Have we no model for their imitation? Yes, surely. Jesus is the pattern for all humanity — for the woman as for the man. The traits of character I have mentioned are womanly as well as manly. It was a woman who wrote these stirring words (Charlotte Bronte) —

No coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere  
I see heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

But if some heroic virtues seem more befitting to man, there are other virtues that are as admirable that find their best development and illustration in woman. Both classes of virtues find their perfection in Him who is by way of eminence the Son of Man — the son of humanity. He represents the human race in its entirety and blends in one perfect life the distinguishing virtues of both sexes. He is outspoken yet not harsh, tender as he is brave and true, considerate yet uncompromising in his devotion to truth and right, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice and yet denouncing sin in high places and low. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "There was in him," says Robertson, "the woman-heart as well as the manly brain — all that was most manly and all that was most womanly." He revealed "the divineness of what is pure above the divineness of what is strong."

Young men and women of the *class of 1904*, study the unique life of Jesus in order to the improvement of your own. Every excellence you find in him may be copied into your lives and add to their completeness. You men can shed tears with him and show no feminine weakness and you women can have his sublime courage and not be mannish women. Whatever your natural idiosyncrasies

of character, he will by his example perfect that which concerneth you.

You all know how strenuously I have urged that the Saviour is much more than Exemplar, that he is first of all a Redeemer by the blood of the cross. I do not abate by one jot or tittle the claim that the very essence of the Good Tidings is the proffer of salvation through the death of the Saviour. Yet it is well to make much of the life of Jesus as the standard of living, as the embodiment of the loftiest ethics the world has ever known. Now especially we do well to lay to heart the lessons of the text and context. What courageous fidelity to the trust committed to him is here expressed—"Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." Nothing was lost that was consigned to his care. So be you absolutely true to your task so that nothing shall be lost by your negligence or insincerity. What self-sacrificing devotion to his disciples! "If ye seek me, let these go their way." That was the spirit of his entire life—the very purpose of his death. "If ye seek me let these go their way"—let me suffer, let them go free. He is still the everlasting, impenetrable shield of his disciples. May this unselfish spirit be yours—that seeks not ease, that fears not pain, that presses not for advantage, that rejoices to serve even the unthankful and the evil, that pours down showers of blessing on the just and on the unjust. May it grow in your esteem and experience as the years flow on! Be like Him! Put to yourself the question—How would Jesus have thought and felt and spoken and done in the place where I am? Let it be your set purpose to make the world a little better by your living.

'Tis not for man to trifle! Life is brief

And sin is here.

Our age is but the falling of a leaf,

A dropping tear.

We have no time to sport away the hours,

All must be earnest in a world like ours.



Not many lives but only one have we,  
One, only one.  
How sacred should that one life ever be,  
That narrow span!  
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,  
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.

New spoil every hour! But from whom? Men are eulogized today for achievement alone, without consideration of its nature or means, forgetting that achievement alone may be iniquitous and injurious. Men are praised for their resourcefulness, who are only abundant in schemes of wickedness, forgetting that the arch-fiend is more resourceful than any of his minions. Why not praise him? If spoil be taken from truth and right, is it cause for gratulation? If Christ's cause be wounded, can Christ's followers rejoice in the triumph that strikes the blow? But to take *new spoil* from the domain of sin in your own life or in the life of the world, to win men away from the enemy of souls, to contribute to human welfare, to glorify God—these are the only real and abiding achievements in the life of any man or woman. I have no greater wish for each and all of you than that you may go forth like Christ—trustfully, hopefully, cheerily, bravely into life and that you may gain in your several spheres some worthy conquests for your Master and for the world, following Him who is both the Divinest and the Manliest, the Son of God and the incomparable Man.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous and thou shalt have good success. . . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”



## SERMON XX, 1905

### HIM THAT IS TRUE

*"We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."*

WE cannot read the letter of John, without feeling that he writes out of a deep experience. His theology is concrete, entering into his character and life. It is no mere abstraction that he gives us but a testimony to what he has seen and felt and tasted and handled of the word of life. He looks out from the vantage ground of a long life of fellowship with the Master and tells us what he sees. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may also have fellowship with the Father and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." When he speaks of the Divine Saviour, he says: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." And when his thoughts turn to the love of God, he connects himself with it in faith and love and says: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." "We love Him because He first loved us." We traverse with Him no cold and barren field, but fields of living green. We look out on no bleak and wintry scene, but on springing blades and opening buds and ripening grain of joyous Christian experience.

It is with no uncertain tottering step that the apostle John advances toward the threshold of eternity. What a ring of assurance is in his words! How much there is about which he can say—"We know." How many things he encourages the disciples to look for in the developing Christian consciousness. "*We know* that whosoever is born of God sinneth not. . . . *We know*

that we are of God. *We know* that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." It is strange that words of the straightforward character of these should be the subject of controversy. And yet their very plainness provokes attack from those who oppose the truth. They must be gotten out of the way or the truth they express will stand in clear and certain view. John's Gospel is so pronounced in its assertion of the Deity of our Lord that its testimony cannot be broken except by challenging the witness and denying John's authorship. And so this passage from his epistle, that is in such harmony with his Gospel upon the same point, has been assailed by those who refuse to honor the Son even as they honor the Father. We enter not into the controversy. We simply ask that the passage be permitted to shine in its own light—that men read it and let it speak for itself—and we are sure it will appear, without any twisting of the meaning or any gloss of interpretation that our Saviour is the true God and eternal life. We limit our consideration to these words.

"We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ" and find in them these two themes:

I. The Saviour's characterization as Him that is true.

II. The Christian's participation in his life and character.

"Him that is true"—the simpler phrase contains a declaration of the Saviour's Deity. In its fullness of meaning it cannot be affirmed of any mere man. The very best of men cannot meet the requirements of God's measuring line. We take no gloomy view of our fellowmen. We would not indulge or arouse suspicion of the great and good men with whom we mingle. We trust them without stint in all the ways of life. We listen with interest and confidence and act upon their counsel. And

yet there sometimes flits across the mind a minimizing thought of what we hear. Concerning even the best of men who live with God, men whom we delight in and love, we harbor questions. Does their experience measure up to their announcements? Does their knowledge extend as far as their opinions? Are they not only sincere but absolutely true, true as the forces of nature, true as the needle to the pole. We roundly assert *our own* integrity and pride ourselves in the accuracy of our speech and the sincerity of our course and yet we do not claim perfection. We do not trust ourselves to the utmost. We would be ashamed to have another know us altogether. Whether then we look at ourselves or others, we cannot escape the conclusion that there are limits to humanity and that God only is true. How often he is spoken of as the true God. John in the intercessory prayer of our Lord records this testimony.

"This is life eternal that they might know thee the true God." Paul writes to the Thessalonians as those who have "turned from idols to serve the living and *true God*." And John declares of the believer in Jesus that he has set his "seal that God is true." God is true as opposed to unreal and true as opposed to false, true to reality and true to his word, capable of fulfilling the functions of Deity and incapable of any slightest variation from the right line of uprightness and truth. Jesus speaks of him exultingly — "He that sent me is true."

And yet the very same phrase is here and elsewhere applied to Jesus. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." John, the Revelator, thus prefaces the message to the angel of the church in Philadelphia (3: 11). These things saith he that is holy, he that is true." And in the vision which he records in the 9th chapter concerning the great world-war, the great Commander, of whom it is written — "His name is called the Word of God," and "His vesture was dipped in blood," is described in these words — "I saw heaven opened and

behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and true and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

It is the Captain of our salvation who is thus characterized. He is one with the Father, having the same substance and essential attributes. He was and is to come the True One — who is the eternal Son of God and very God and fitly described as "Him that is true."

Every *word* that he has spoken may be relied on to the utmost. Is it a word of threatening? Be assured it is no idle threat, no empty bravado such as foolish men sometimes indulge in. If he says — "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," the dread alternative will come to pass. It must be so or else his word of promise will be weakened by the same process that weakens his word of menace. But no, his word is true and whatever be the nature of the message, it will stand forever. Does he say — "I will give you rest" . . . "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you." — Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." — "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you." Does he say these things? Then doubt not, for not one jot or tittle of all that he has spoken shall fail. They will all be fulfilled because they are the words of *Him that is true*, of the faithful and true Witness.

What an invaluable friend he is! He has spoken, but that is not all. He lives — lives today and ever lives to befriend those who trust him.

You have had maybe *one* friend that was another self to you, that was better and truer to you than you could have been to yourself. Mountains and seas may have divided you, fellowship may have been broken by long separation, diverse aims and pursuits and relations may have exerted a divisive influence, yet confidence was undiminished and fellowship was eagerly resumed as soon

as you came together. What was the secret of it? Why did you confide in another so serenely? Because you knew him to be true, often tried and always true.

You have had other friends maybe and have learned their limitations. Their limitations are in their very nature. They are not true to you to the utmost because they cannot be. The work of the world would scarcely go on if we would at once break with everyone who has failed us at some point. We take men and women as they are and go on with our associated endeavors counting them to be friends, who within their own limitations are friendly and true.

Yet we feel the need of some one better and truer than they — a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Very rarely we find one among our fellows who rises superior in our estimation to the mass of men. But we find such a friend pre-eminently in the covenant-keeping Redeemer and rejoice in him with an unspeakable joy. Judas may betray and Peter may deny and even John may forsake, but Jesus is — “He that is true. We lean on Him with unshaken confidence. We fly from the false many to the faithful One, who is the same, yesterday and today and forever.

But what of Jesus *as a man*? As a man he must be true. There can be no schism in the person of the God-man. His human nature was real yet sinless. It *must* be so else the union with his divine person would be most unseemly. Such incongruity between holy God and sinful humanity would be monstrous. But the supposition is vain; no semblance of inconsistency appears. The impression he made on his own generation and on the generations since then is that he was a perfect man. In the face of this general verdict of the ages it would take some hardihood to pick flaws in the character of the man Christ Jesus. Even those who stumble at his divinity, will not deny or impugn his veracity or fidelity or purity as a man.



What did his contemporaries say of him? I think the Herodians, however insincere themselves, uttered the prevailing sentiment and the real truth when they said — "We know that Thou art true and speakest the words of truth and carest not for any man."

What did *they* say who were close to him? The confidence of Mary, his mother, is shown by her command to the servants at the marriage of Cana — "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Judas charged himself with the betrayal of innocence. It is as if he said in the words of the prophet Isaiah — "He did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." John the Baptist instinctively shrank from the baptism of Jesus, and said — "The latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose." Peter looking back over the years of intimacy with his Master, wrote in his first letter — "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." No insincere praise, no words of double meaning intended to mislead, no exaggerated statements, no suppression of a part of the truth, no falsehoods however petty or harmless or conventional, ever escaped from his lips. To all who accept the New Testament record, it is simply unthinkable that Jesus should have prevaricated or broken faith or deceived, that anything crooked or tortuous should have marred his straightforward, unspotted course. His very silences were true. Carlyle said — "It seems to me the finest nations of the world — the English and American — are going all away into wind and tongue. Silence is the eternal duty of a man." Jesus knew how and when to be silent. He sometimes hungered to be alone and withdrew from the crowd. He sometimes kept silent when speech was expected. He was too true to be casting pearls before swine. He would not speak to gratify the whim of the flippant, cunning Herod, nor to assist Pilate in finding a loophole of escape from his self-wrought entanglement. More than one evangelist records that the governor marvelled greatly and no wonder. Jesus'



self-poise, his refusal to waste words on a conscienceless court, his calm silence was a rebuke to Pilate's insincerity and a wonder to his worldly mind.

There is yet another test we may apply to Jesus — the test of his own consciousness. And certainly there is no failure at this point. He *knew* that he was true. His whole course implies this. How outspoken he is in regard to the claims of truth! How he insists on the inner virtues of the heart! How his indignation thunders against the hypocrites! How often he appeals to the present scrutiny of the Heart-searcher! How often to the future revelation of the secrets of men in the great day! He could not do all these things without coming face to face with reality. Either he was conscious of his own integrity, or with reverence be it spoken he was an imposter and hypocrite. Who can hesitate in the presence of such an alternative. The thought of hypocrisy is blasphemous and beyond the belief of the most superficial student of the life of Christ. He knew that he was true. He made no confession of sin. He challenged his traducers — Which of you convinceth me of sin? He swerved not once nor in the least particular from the path of perfect truth and uprightness.

I have read recently that the most accurate clock in the world is in the basement of the Berlin observatory. It has been running since 1865 and often for three months at a time with a daily deviation of not more than fifteen-thousandths of a second. But this is not accurate enough to suit astronomers and so it is put in an air-tight underground room so as to reduce the variation to its lowest point. Such an accurate measuring instrument is Jesus in the sky of the human soul — nay, even such accuracy does not approach that of Jesus. He varies not the least from the moral standard of the universe. Whoever regulates his life by the example of Jesus will make no wrong calculations and take no wrong steps. My young friends, keep your eye of contemplation and faith and

love — on this perfect moral and spiritual regulator — on Him that is true and you will be true yourself.

Let us consider the second place.

II. The Christian's participation in the life and character of Christ, "We are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."

"In Christo" has been called the monogram of St. Paul, so frequently does it appear in his epistles. Thirty-three times the very phrase occurs and many times more its equivalents. It shows how much the life of believers lies in union with Christ. They are as close to Him as the members of the body to the head, as close as the thinking brain to the movement of my hand in gesture or my lips in speech. They are as close to him as the living branch to the living vine, whose continuous outflow of nourishment gives support and vigor to the branch. Separation from Jesus means arrest of Christian life altogether. Jesus in his discourse to his disciples says: "Severed from me ye can do nothing." The early Christians understood this and traced every good thing they experienced to this source. In the Roman catacombs, the frequent inscription on the tombs, rudely written yet with sufficient clearness, is "*in Christo*," with various accompaniments such as these — "In peace and in Christ — Accepted in Christ — Hope in Christ — A lovable and holy person in Christ — Sleeps in Christ."

This reveals what was and is the keynote of Christianity. This is what it is to be a Christian. Primarily and chiefly and forever it is to be *in Christ Jesus*. Whatever other notes we sound let them be held in harmony with this keynote. It must not be smothered by forms, nor lost amid pledges and promises, nor dissipated amid the endless branches of a complete organization. Over all these and through all these let it ring out clear and strong, for out of fellowship with the living Christ come all things good and great in Christian life.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant  
O Life, not Death for which we pant,  
More life and fuller is what we want.

Our Saviour is not only an example — a revealer of what is highest in human character, but a character — making power in the human soul. Oneness with him means participation in his virtues. The writer to the Hebrew Christians says — “We are made partakers of Christ Jesus.” There is a spiritual continuity between him and us, so that his very nature flows into us. “I live,” says St. Paul, yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

How may I maintain this spiritual continuity so that his life may become mine? By believing in him, by exercising my faith upon him with ever fresh vigor. We may not be able to eliminate wholly the mystical element from the spiritual commerce between Christ and us. Yet the means of it are clear and the results of it are of supreme practical importance. The whole power of the Christian life lies here and we grow in holiness as we increase in intimacy with our Lord.

Perhaps we may be helped to a better understanding of the power of Christ in us by considering the influence of a merely human fellowship. How is it that association leads to assimilation? Why is companionship such a tremendous force in shaping character? Solomon says it in the strongest way and the widest observation will confirm his words — “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Whether we understand it or not we know the fact and make it the plea for elevating friendships. If we make a companion of Jesus, if we find delight in study of his life and sayings, if we trust and love him as our own Matchless Friend, if we keep in close touch with

him and meet him as often as we may in the places he has appointed, by this natural law we cannot help becoming like him. "But we all beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord; are transformed into the same image from glory to glory; even as from the Lord the Spirit." The very perfection of the heavenly life will be attained in this way according to the word of John — "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Dr. Deems, long pastor of "The Church of the Strangers," in New York, wrote to his friend when he was past his seventy years in this glowing way — "To my increasing love for the personality of Jesus Christ I attribute all that is sweet and good in the present condition of my life. Increasingly he seems to become the rarest, finest gentleman I have ever known; the noblest, truest, most satisfying Friend I have ever had; and so grand a conqueror of all worlds that I am ready to stay with him in any world or go with him to any world." Who can estimate the transforming efficacy of such a fellowship?

This assimilating process will advance most in regard to those virtues on which we dwell much in our thoughts. This afternoon we have meditated on a trait of Jesus' character that is central and pervasive and that ought to be central and pervasive in our lives. We are in Him that is true. I wish we might get so near to the heart of our Redeemer in this direction that we would get the rhythm of it in our hearts — ours beating in unison with his. I verily believe that there is nothing that so seriously vitiates a character as falsehood and that no virtue is so far-reaching and profound in its influence as sincerity. The man who lies has a worm at the root of every virtue he seems to possess and there is always ground of hope of him who scorns a lie. Even one clear-cut departure from the King's highway of truth often cuts a sluice in the character out of which may flow every good thing. How often the element of pretense spoils

the grain of the wood in a character otherwise exemplary! How often a single false step starts one on a career of mendacity and trickery, partizanship and sham.

You have read George Eliot's "*Romola*," in which Tito is an important character. He is an attractive, brilliant young man, making many friends. Then comes a moment when he must make a choice between selfish ease and self-sacrifice. We see him entering into serious colloquy with himself. Shall he expend the price of gems on himself or for the ransom of one to whom he owed all that he had become? It was no very decisive thing that he did and there were very good and plausible reasons for the doing of it. Yet it was the beginning of falseness at the core of his being. He began by juggling with his own mind, yielding to the "impulse to conceal half the fact" from himself as well as from others. And then in the expressive phrase of the reviewer his "*talent for concealment*" fast developed into something less neutral and then as a "virulent acid appeared eating its rapid way through all the tissues of sentiment"—of gratitude, of honor, even of humanity. As one has well said—the moral of the story of Tito lies, not in the vivid story of his outward fortunes, or in the poetic justice and the tragic suddenness of his death, but in the unfolding step by step of the deterioration of a brilliant and gifted nature through the preference of what is pleasant to what is right." First the shutting of the eye on half the fact, then a growing facility in concealment, then an all-devouring acid of selfishness and at last complete moral ruin. May it not be the record of the life of any one of you!

I commend to you the fellowship of Him that is true as a sufficient shield against such a course and such a fate. As one has said—"His very company kills insincerity." That which is true in Him reinforces what soever things are true in us. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."



We are gathering about the broken body of our Lord. We are about to enter into communion with Him at His table. It seems fitting that he should be the theme of our thought at the very threshold of our privilege.

What is Jesus to you? I trust he has already won your heart in faith and love. Is he your Beloved; have you already seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? I wish that every one of you might catch the expression of his face that is contained in our text and carry it with you to the end of your days.

I can appreciate the feelings of the Italian painter who was making a picture of the Last Supper. One by one he painted the Apostles, giving expression to his own conception of their respective characters. Then he began to study the character of the Saviour, taking up his attributes in detail, spurring his imagination to the great task of duly setting him forth. At last he threw down his pencil in despair and exclaimed—"The face of Jesus cannot be painted." I do not wonder at his despair.

I have never taken much interest in a composite portrait in which the artist has combined the faces of a given collection of men in one. It looks characterless as compared with the distinctive character of each of the faces lost in the combination. So it seems to me it is not possible to bring out the whole character of Christ in a single face. He is so many-sided, pre-eminent in so many things that the attempt to produce them all in one is hopeless if we would give adequate expression to any. This afternoon we have sought to hold your gaze on a single feature of that face, a single ray from that gleaming character. If the artist were painting a portrait of Jesus as suggested by our text he would present a countenance full of strength, frank, thoughtful, earnest, honest as the day, transparent as the crystal. Let me urge you to carry this mental picture somewhere near your heart. Think of Him henceforth as the One that is True and strive to be like him. What the home needs, what society



needs, what the church needs, what the country needs, is men and women that are true — true to God, true to themselves and true to one another.

Trueness is the richest charm of woman. Trueness is the noblest crown of man. May it adorn every one of you in all the relations of life. Be what you would seem to be. Clarify your vision, simplify your needs, shun hollowness and vanity, be true, be true. For we are in Him that is true even in His Son Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XXI, 1906

### RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY OF THE LORD

*Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power in holy array: out of the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.—Ps. 110.*

**T**HIS psalm is clearly Messianic. Perowne says — “It is more frequently cited by the New Testament writers than any other single portion of the ancient scriptures.” And the citations always have a clear application to Jesus as the Messiah. When the Pharisees and Sadducees buried their differences for the time and joined hands in an assault upon Jesus, the last word with which he crushed them into silence was taken from this psalm. Read the swift record of it as given by Matthew (22:42-46) — “What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying — The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.” And Peter in his discourse on the day of Pentecost nails with this scripture his argument for the Messiahship of Jesus — “For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.” So, too, the author of the letter to the Hebrews quotes this psalm

no less than five times in the course of his comparison of Christianity and Judaism. If Peter and Paul and other New Testament writers and likewise our Lord himself appeal to this psalm as authoritative and ascribe it to David as its inspired author, surely we do well to study its meaning and accept the lessons and promptings it gives.

Christ is the theme of this psalm — Christ the exalted, reigning King, “who being the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” His royal right is disputed by wicked men and devils and he wages righteous war to establish his claim. Around his standard rally heroic souls in every time and clime, won from the ranks of his enemies by the winning, melting, subduing power of his grace. They wage war along with Him against sin and Satan. They submit themselves to Him and join with Him to make conquest of the world, to take possession of thrones and principalities and powers, institutions and customs and laws. They are reconstructing society on Christian lines and seeking to break the yoke from the neck of every slave of vice and misrule, of superstition and darkness, of evil inclination and habit and prejudice.

Already has the rod of his strength gone forth out of Zion. When the day of Pentecost was fully come his saving power was manifested in the conversion of multitudes in a day. It began in Jerusalem but did not end there. It began in Jerusalem and went forth into all the world to reclaim it. The marching orders of the King had in view the dethronement of that old usurper — the prince of this world — in all places of his dominion.

And so the scepter of his power stretched out over Asia Minor and Greece and Rome under the leadership of the Apostle Paul. It renewed its sway over the lands of Europe under Luther and Melancthon and Calvin and

Beza and Knox. It touched the dry bones of Israel in the days of Wesley and Whitfield and a great host of valiant defenders of the faith sprang into life. It has kept alive and vigorous the spirit of godliness in individual souls and homes and congregations and countries, reviving the saints of God and subduing sinners under his yoke. It is extending its rule into the islands of the sea and into the great unevangelized continents of Asia and Africa today.

Will the conquest ever be complete? Will the army of the King be furnished with recruits for such a world campaign? — world-wide and world deep, deep as its sin and wide as its domain? Will there be enlistments to meet the requirements of the service? Will they have the spirit, the consecration and courage to take up the conflict where they are or to go where they are sent? The answer to all such inquiries may be heard in our text — “Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power in holy array; out of the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

I. The soldiers of the army of the Lord are mustered in and endued for service *in the day of Christ's power*. They are enlisted through the agency of the Holy Spirit. We refer not now chiefly to conversion, though that prime experience is certainly due to the power of the quickening life-giving Spirit. It may likewise be said that the germ of all subsequent consecration to the service of God is contained in the genuine conversion of the soul to God. And yet there are those who in the judgment of charity are converted, who are not warriors for the Lord. It would seem like irony to call them soldiers of the cross. They undergo no discipline, they endure no hardship, they undertake no duty. They are at ease in Zion, they stand for no principle of righteousness, they are not known as defenders of the faith or supporters of the cause of Christ, they are not enlisted to be first, last and all the time on the side of their Master. Yet

their names are on the roster of the Lord's host and they are encamped with his followers.

When the army of the Lord is mobilized for service the people of God are not only enlisted but empowered. The Apostles, though for three years they were under the coaching and instruction of the Lord himself were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit. They had preparation but they still lacked power and, therefore, the Master said to them—"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Power appears in very various ways. It may roar like a lion, or it may come upon us as silently as a sunbeam. It may shake the earth's surface as if it were a jelly and not a solid crust, casting down lofty structures and towers and domes of human achievement in one indiscriminate, valueless mass, or it may lift a great weight of rock by the invisible enginery of the frost. So is the Spirit's power variously manifested. It may be in "the mighty rushing wind" or in the "still, small voice." It may appear in the crowded assembly where Torrey speaks and Alexander sings, or it may be in the hand-picking ministry of the house to house visitor, or in the quiet life of a godly mother. It may happen that a single bed-ridden saint has more real power than goes forth from a skillfully managed convention. Some of you will remember the story told by Mr. S. D. Gordon in the quiet talks he gave us some years ago, the story of a confirmed invalid in London, who for two years had been praying for a revival in the cold, dead, church to which she belonged. One day her sister went home from Church and told her a man from America by the name of Moody preached that morning. She simply answered—"Our church is going to be revived; for two years I have been praying for the coming of that man." The revival came and the place of power was in that sick woman's chamber, all unknown to the world.

Let us not think that the power of the Holy Ghost

is for the revivalist alone, for the great meeting only, for the ministry and the missionary. Surely it is for these. But not less surely is it for every Christian in every place, in every good calling, in every set of circumstances, with every kind of gift. Let us every one be ambitious for power, power to do good in the world, power to glorify Christ with whatever gifts we have.

Neither let us think of the day of power as some day of great things in the Church's life, some splendid day of the Spirit's power when a mighty electric thrill ran through a vast audience and stirred it to enthusiasm and action. The day of his power may be for a single individual.

You love to tell of some great concourse of people, moved as one man to act for a great cause. Perhaps it was a day when the separated fragments of the Church of God came together in happy union and their jubilant praise was like the sound of many waters. Perhaps it was a day when the hosts of freedom assembled and in a solemn silence pledged themselves to God and one another to break the chains of slavery. Perhaps it was a great convention of laymen, coming, under the Spirit's guidance to know and feel their relation to the Kingdom of God and their responsibility for it. "These were the days of his power," you say and say truly. But not any more so than when he comes to a single soul with a great blessing or a great conviction or purpose. It was the day of God's power when Joel Stratton laid his loving hand on John B. Gough and won that genius of oratory to the cause of temperance. It was the day of God's power for Wendell Phillips when, at 25 years of age, he horrified the aristocracy of Boston by identifying himself with the odious Abolitionists and when not long after he made the walls of Faneuil Hall ring with his volcanic eloquence in defense of liberty. And so the power of God may come upon you personally. It may be in a situation altogether inconspicuous. It may make no appeal to your



love of display. It may be an impulse to pray, a suggestion to speak to another, an infilling of strength to bear a heavy load. It may inflame your zeal to labor or put iron in your blood to stand.

The day of power is here and now. The center of power is at God's right hand. Thence issues the Spirit to abide with us forever. Do we wish to be in connection with this infinite source of power? Do we crave it? Do we pray for it?

More than anything else we need it. We know better than we practice. We talk better than we live. We seem better than we are. Our show window is larger than our stock of goods. It is not so much more knowledge and better speech that we need, but more power, power to will and do, to resist winsome, winning wrong, to speak the right word when speech is the bravest action, power divine to support our feebleness, to chasten our earthliness, to thrust us out from ourselves.

To be like Him; to keep  
Unspotted from the world; to reap  
But where he leads; to think,  
To dream, to hope, as one who would but drink  
Of purity and grow  
More like the Christ; to go  
Through time's sweet labyrinths pure and brave and true;  
To stand sin's tests; to dare, to do  
For Him though all the price  
Be stained in dye of sacrifice.  
This were to be  
Sustained by his infinity  
And given  
A foretaste of the ecstasy of heaven.

— *George Kringle.*

II. The soldiers of the army of the Lord are *volunteers*. They offer themselves willingly in the day of

God's power." No one is compelled to be a subject of our King, nor to enter the ranks of his professed followers. By their own free and hearty choice they rally to his standard.

Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of his Kingdom than conscription, conversion by force. Men of the Saviour's day sought to make him such a King but he refused. Sometimes his followers in later ages so far forgot his orders as to make conquests in his name by force of arms. But the real genius of the Gospel is altogether different. The Kingdom of Christ is a Kingdom of the truth. He is the Truth—the living truth—its personal embodiment and when he is fitly presented he wins the hearts of men. Persuasion is the instrument to be employed and not compulsion. Men are to be drawn and not driven.

It was a new thing on the earth. It did not, as the Ethnic religions, depend on the power of the state to give it sway. It was false to itself whenever it so allied itself with the state. Uniformity of belief was purchased at too great a price when paid for by surrender of the liberty of the individual to search the scriptures for himself, to join with others in adherence to the truth as they found it. Christ makes men free. He does not oppress but liberates. He appeals to the conscience and the reason and the larger interests of men. His own ministry was a preaching one. He says, distinctly,—“Therefore came I forth” (Mark 1:38). His commission to his recruiting officers does not say—“Go subdue them by arms,” but, “Go spread the Gospel.” The means of their subjugation is speech not force. When they surrender, it is a glad surrender, with the full consent of every element of their being, with faith and love and joy as they survey the excellencies and glories of their new Master. What a blessed promise is that of Isaiah and how gloriously it has been fulfilled in New Testament times—“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty

and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel." Isa. 44: 3-5. Their experience is as spontaneous as the growing grass of the springtime or the willows that shoot up on the edges of the stream. Their words are the outbursts of genuine emotion as they claim the Lord as their own and write it down as a perpetual covenant not to be broken.

The soldiers of the cross are not merely willing but determined to serve Christ. They *will* to offer themselves unto God. Their decision is not negative but positive. It is not consent wrung out by undue pressure but purpose born of conviction of mind and heart. It may spring into existence like a flash or it may come slowly to its dominion. But when it is reached it kindles the whole being into flame or burns with a steady glow. It may not be noisily in evidence and yet be burning intensely within. It may be felt by those who come near rather than displayed to those who are afar. Beecher explains the power of the apostles by their zeal and says — "They were hot all over and everywhere men caught fire on their sacred touch." They were constrained by the love of Christ to love him and they compassed sea and land to gather others to his standard.

Perhaps no man of the last century gained such mastery over men as Napoleon, such personal devotion from those who followed his fortunes. Yet these words are attributed to him and seem to be authentic — "I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man — There is between Christianity and other religions the distance of infinity.

"Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself all founded enterprises. But on what did we rest the creatures of our genius? Upon sheer force. Jesus

Christ alone founded his empire upon love; and at the hour millions of men will die for him."

Are these words true? Yes, there are men and women in this age, as there have been in ages past, who are willing to die for Him. There are living heroes as well as those of precious memory. Some are on the firing line, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ and others are in the supporting column and others are chafing in reserve and all alike are filled with a consuming zeal. It is the fulfilment of the word of the Baptist—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In the day of the Spirit's power there will be more fiery zeal, more fervency of spirit, more love for Christ and souls of men, more intensity of devotion to the Kingdom of Christ. Of bodily exercise we have enough—it is more godliness we want. Of ecclesiastical machinery we have enough—it is the dynamic of real earnestness we should seek for.

Some seem to think they are doing a great thing, even complimenting Christ by giving their names to him. They come, as John Berridge the witty contemporary of Whitfield says—"like a coxcomb thinking if he is something so are they." Their profession is a new feather in their own cap instead of an oath of allegiance to Christ. They are holiday soldiers, skulkers when the fight is on, with no real fire in their bones, no real consecration to Jesus. Heaven forbid that we should be of this number! For very shame come out from among them!

You are willing to be known as a Christian. Are you as honestly willing to have Christ reign over you? Will you listen for the orders of the Captain of your salvation and obey? In view of all the possible demands of his service, do you declare your readiness to let Him have his way with you?

III. The soldiers of the army of the Lord are attractively equipped. They offer themselves willingly in *holy*

*array.* Equipment usually includes habiliments and arms and in this connection stress is laid upon the former. They are clad in garments of a priest, indicating something of the nature of their warfare. They are priests as well as soldiers, not cruel but gentle, ministering instead of mangling, leading men back to God by the grace of their own lives.

That which gives them their attractive power is their holy array. It differs from the array of display. It comes from within instead of being put on from without. Herod's royal apparel could not long conceal the mass of moral and physical corruption that was beneath it. Jesus on the other hand needed not the gorgeous robe of Herod's mockery, for the glory of his matchless character shone through every outward covering. Jesus said of the lilies at his feet—"Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." With his clear insight into common things he saw what others failed to see. The glory of the lily was of its very nature, coming out of its very heart. But the glory of Solomon was a thing of gold and gems that might be laid aside and, alas, was no true index of the inward glory of the man. Holy array of this deep, inwrought kind is the distinguishing mark of the Christian warrior. It attracts others to the cross of Christ. By its means he wins; by lack of it he loses even where he seems to win.

We are loath to lose the old phrase—"the beauties of holiness," even though its place is taken in the revised version by such elegant words as "holy array." There is a pleasure in the discernment of beauty in all its kinds. It is sought and prized as a thing of value. No incense of flattery is so grateful to many as to overhear the words of admiration—How beautiful! It may be beauty of form or carriage, or beauty of dress or color, or beauty of expression beaming forth from the windows of the soul, or charm of manner or of intellect. But higher than all these is beauty of character and highest of all in



character is the beauty of holiness. To be true and tender and just and pure—in short, to be holy is the very acme of beauty—the beauty of God. To be this and yet unconscious of it, to be humble as well as holy—this is the finest and best equipment for the service of Christ. This is the “fine linen, clean and white,” which is the “righteousness of saints” Rev. 19:8-14. My friends, there is no such a thing as conquest for Christ by unrighteousness; to do wrong is always and everywhere to fail. God may overrule the wrong-doing of his people, but it is none the less a hindrance. Jacob would have been a better instrument of God, if he had never been a wicked supplanter. Lot’s compromising attitude did not regenerate Sodom and Samson with his manifold faults and sins left the work of deliverance for Israel half-done. On the other hand, Caleb who followed the Lord fully was mighty in driving out the enemies of Israel and permanently establishing himself in his inheritance.

“Anything to win!” will not do in any campaign for the Lord. It is a devil’s maxim anyway in any kind of enterprise. In all their undertakings the children of God are not bound to win, but to be worthy to win. And in the enterprises of Christ there is nothing but failure and weakness whenever we trail our flag in the mire of sin.

Do you think you can win men to Christ by lowering your standard of morals to the level of theirs. No! No! Your thought is vain, you may spread yourself over a wider surface, but you destroy your influence for good and maybe tip the scale of influence to the nether side.

Mr. Speer in his sketches of “men who overcame” calls Henry Camp of Yale the “knightly soldier,” not only because he fell in one of the hard-fought battles of the Civil War, but because of his soldierly qualities as a Christian. A brother officer tells that on one occasion they were playing chess together when one of the



number used impure language and further says —“ Camp blushed like a maiden and then as the same style of remark was repeated, he arose from his seat, saying, “ Let us find another place; the air is very foul here.” A rebuke tactfully and vigorously given and well deserved. One of his college friends said of him —“ All of us who were about him perceived that Henry Camp was a Christian who followed Christ. All things that were true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, shone in his walk and conversation.” Mr. Speer, himself, says —“ He was graduated from college in 1860 with high honor; but what is more, with the deep love of men who had seen no flaws in him and some of whom he had won to the Saviour.” I commend to you college men his example. It teaches this great lesson that whoever without angularity yet with straightforward sincerity pursues unswervingly a right life will win the final respect of his fellows and exert the mightiest influence upon them for good.

IV. The conquering army of the Lord is made up of those in the dew of *their youth*—young men and maidens. However variously these somewhat intricate phrases are disentangled all discover in them substantially the same thought. The youthful warriors are compared to the dew of the morning. In the day of God’s power they shall be like the dewdrops in multitude in sparkling beauty and in refreshing influence making the desert earth to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

The armies of *the world* are made up of young men. Those who conquered the rebellion were the young men of the time, the great majority of the soldiers ranging in age from sixteen to thirty. Many of the scarred veterans were mere striplings forty-five years ago. That so many are yet with us is evidence enough of this fact. Always a great war draws heavily upon the youth of the country.

More and more, as life grows complex and strenuous, *the world's work* as well as its warfare is done by young men.

Need we wonder then if in the great moral war — the war in behalf of the Kingdom of Christ, the chief dependence must be upon the youth of the Church, young women not less than young men, young women as often as otherwise being in the van of the conflict. Years ago I heard an eminent minister say — “The best work of the world is never paid for.” I often think of it as I see the unofficial, unpaid, self-sacrificing labors of young women in Sabbath Schools and temperance organizations and missionary societies and other lines of Christian work.

The characteristics of youth eminently fit them for all kinds of aggressive activity. Of course, there is a place for everyone of whatever age in the service of the Lord. There is need too of wisdom as well as fire and energy. I like to think there is some good meaning in Oliver Wendell Holmes' definition of youth as “something in the soul which has no more to do with the color of the hair than the vein of gold in a rock has to do with the grass a thousand feet above it,” or as another says, that, “a man is only as old as he feels.” And yet we must admit that youth is in the blood as well as in the soul and a man is likely to feel as old as he is. Youth is optimistic, enthusiastic, energetic. It fears not to project great enterprises; it is brave in the face of dangers. Says Dr. Parker in his own vivid way — “What is my life? A youthhood bright with cloudless hope; a passion; an eye at a telescope — a wind southerly and rich with promises and blessings; a wild strength; a scornful laugh at difficulty; a challenge to presumptuous rivalry; a victory ere the fight begins.” What a bright picture of a young man's hopeful outlook on life! Let this “wild strength be harnessed to the chariots of God. Let our young men and women in the spirit of their years, undertake great things for God and expect great things from God. Let

them set a pace for themselves in zeal and labor that even advancing years cannot wholly check and thus run a whole life of fidelity to God and man.

Young men and young women of the class of 1906, my words tonight are addressed to you especially. The dew of your youth is yet yours and great are the possibilities that lie before you.

To what will you devote your lives? What is the thing of most importance to you? What will you inscribe on the topmost round of the ladder of your ambition?

I am not thinking now of this calling or that — of the ministry or the mission field, but of the central, controlling spirit of your lives. What is the interest you intend to make supreme with you, I submit to you that the rightful King of every man or woman is Jesus Christ — that to be under Him, to be for Him is the very highest conception of living. Let your calling be what it may only so it be in harmony with the law of God, but let it be not an end in itself but the means to the larger, nobler end of service to Christ.

I have in my mind's eye a man of thirty-five in the full tide of prosperity, with all the vigor and bloom of health and strength. He has succeeded in the enterprises of business and already has a competence and bright prospect of wealth and worldly influence. He has friends among good men and is without degrading habits or associations. Men praise him for doing well. But it seems as if God is lost out of his life and eternity is very far off and Jesus Christ the King of men is almost forgotten. The world is in his heart and his heart is in the world.

I have in mind another, a young woman of attractive form and feature, of bright intellect, inheriting a modest competence. She has given her life to a degenerated people and identified herself with their narrow conditions that she may the better serve them.

She has abandoned the pleasures and rivalries of society for which she is sufficiently well-fitted and gone to live with the objects of her philanthropic endeavor. She is happy in the love of those whose elevation she seeks. The world is under her feet and Christ is on the throne of her heart.

Which of these, think you, is making the most of life?

You cannot exactly duplicate any other life. But in the great war of the world you can have your heart in the right place and you can keep yourself from being in morals and religion a nonentity. Whatever be the weight of your personality, throw it on the side of the King, on the side of stalwart righteousness, on the side of truth and purity and love.

Sometime the war will be over and the hosts of God will celebrate their victory. I can imagine with what a proud step the veterans at the grand review at the close of the Civil War tramped the streets of Washington. They were proud of the splendid fellowship of brave men and the victorious issue of their struggles! They could say—"I helped to win the battle for the right." There will be another assembling of victorious hosts when this cruel world-war is over. The Kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan will be dethroned and sin will be uprooted and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. Happy will we be if we can say in that day—"We helped to win the victory. We willingly offered ourselves in holy array in the days of our youth and gave our entire lives to the mighty struggle."

My young friends, is not this the one thing that is worth doing? Is not this what makes life worth living? Is not this the best possible issue of the life you are now pressing into? Make your life a psalm. Fill it with praise of your Redeemer. Keep your ear to the ground to hear some notes of that song of the white-robed multitude that stand before the throne with palms of victory

in their hands, crying with a loud voice —“ Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb.”

Hark! those bursts of acclamation,  
Hark! those loud triumphant chords,  
Jesus takes the highest station,  
Oh! what joy the sight affords.  
Crown Him, crown Him —  
King of Kings and Lord of Lords.















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